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Worldwide D&D® Game Day Saturday, October 16, 2004

Come celebrate the historic 30th Anniversary of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® roleplaying game on Worldwide D&D Game Day.

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EXPERIENCE COUNTS

SECOND BEST

I'm going to say something, and I need you to take me seriously.

The D&D movie sequel represents the best thing to happen to D&D since the release of third edition.

Okay, I admit that sounds crazy, but hear me out.

Not long after the D&D craze hit the world in the late 70s, a lot of folks started to become suspicious of the game. DUNGEONS & DRAGONS was a new concept, completely alien to people who thought of games in terms of boards and cards. Its themes of monsters, magic, and violence (not to mention drawings of naked women) put parents on their guard.

During the 80s—despite a Saturday-morning cartoon, a toy line, and many computer games—the suspicion turned into persecution. The game came under fire for everything from Satanism to causing suicides.

During the 90s, after blaming our problems on everything from cartoons to video games, scapegoating lost some of its appeal, but DUNGEONS & DRAGONS still kept a relatively low profile. TSR, the company that produced the game, even went so far as to take such objectionable terms as "demon" and "devil" out of the game. D&D passed from the public eye, and ultimately, TSR ceased producing its flagship game.

The D&D craze, the cartoon and toys, even the scapegoating—all served to buoy D&D. They raised awareness of the game, and the greatest challenge facing D&D right now is a lack of public awareness.

In 1980, D&D's strong fan base and the support of a large corporation like Hasbro would have kept the game going, but the market today, with its improved technologies and experiences for everything from TV to cell phones, exerts a much stronger pressure on D&D to be financially successful. To continually compete for people's pocket money and leisure time, D&D must find a larger audience.

I'm not saying D&D is doomed—quite the contrary. D&D is making a comeback, and if the D&D movie sequel (now filming in Lithuania) makes it to theaters, it will cinch it.

Critics panned the first D&D movie, and it gave a mediocre box-office performance, but its worst flaw was that it didn't significantly influence the public. Even with the success of the Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings films, people don't connect the themes of those movies with D&D.

The sequel can change that. With great fantasy films fresh in their minds, people will go to see the new D&D movie. They might come out of the theater and tell their friends, "*Return of the King* was way better than *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*," but they'll be talking about D&D to other people, and they'll be thinking about it when they go to see the next Harry Potter film. D&D will again occupy a place in the public consciousness, and that, more than anything else, drives people to become curious and pick up a copy of the game.

I hope they make a trilogy.

Matthew Sernett
Editor-in-Chief

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON

DRAGON #325

DRAGON gives you the best in gaming, presenting new official rules, original game content, great advice, and the perfect inspiration for your D&D game. In each issue, you'll also see what cool products are on the horizon, find out what other players are up to, and get an insider's look at the industry. Get more from your game: Get *DRAGON!*

Arcane Ancestry 2

by Scott Carter
The power of sorcery comes from the blood. See what your sorcerer can do when something other than a dragon roosts in his family tree.

Hometown Heroes

by Ben Vandgrift
Who are the people in your neighborhood? Give your character real experience by giving some thought to her roots.

Spellcasting Feats

by Tim Hitchcock
Make spellcasting magical again with over a dozen new feats for spellcasters.

War Magic

by Joshua Cole
Learn what spells work best on any battlefield and how to cast them like a pro.

Plus!

"Winning Races: Lupins," "The Ecology of Duergar," "A Novel Approach: *Dune*," and of course, "Coup de Grace," "Class Acts," "Spellcraft," "The Magic Shop," "Gaining Prestige," "Heroic Feats," "Silicon Sorcery," "First Watch," "Player Initiative," "Scale Mail," "Adventurer Tricks," "Player Tips," "Sage Advice," and comics!

A PATH FORMED BY *Dark Ambition*

In the wake of the War of Souls, the mysterious warrior-woman Mina grieves for her Dark Queen. Despair turns to determination as Mina gathers a new army of followers to carry out the wishes of her new patron—Chemosh, God of Death. As malevolent forces conspire and conflict arises, a brave monk of Majere abandons his faith and sets out to stop Mina and her disciples.

Amber and Ashes is the first book in an exciting new series by *New York Times* best-selling author Margaret Weis—the Mistress of Fantasy.

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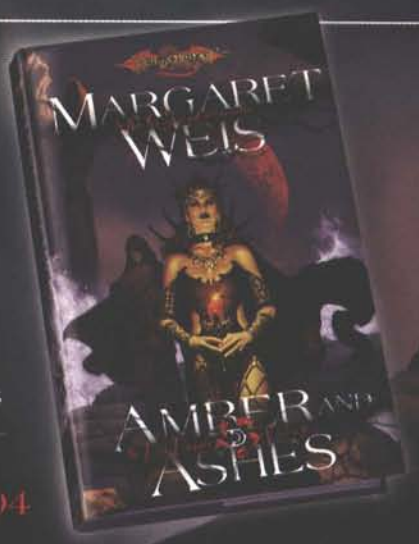

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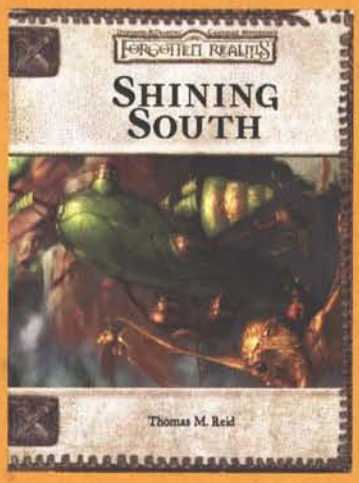
Previews, Notes, and News for Gamers

NEW RELEASES

D&D's new book of the dead—make that undead—*Libris Mortis* hits the shelves this month, presenting all new undead monsters and advice for how to use undead in a campaign. Be sure to check out the swarm shifter template contributed by DRAGON's editor-in-chief, Matthew Sernett. Wizards of the Coast didn't forget players, though. The book contains plenty of undead-hunting advice, rules, feats, and prestige classes. There's even a section on playing an undead character!

Libris Mortis releases this month.



Magic made common, drow on the surface, warrior halflings, and flying ships. No, it's not EBERRON, it's the Shining South, the FORGOTTEN REALMS region of ancient cultures and fallen empires. From a nation of half-drow to one full of wizards, *Shining South* has plenty to offer anyone looking to put a little more magic into their game or character. New feats, prestige classes, monsters, magic items, and spells await you inside.

Shining South releases this month.

A LOOK BACK

Push those empty pizza boxes and dice out of the way! Wizards of the Coast produced something truly worth placing on your coffee table. In *30 Years of Adventure*, you'll find a history of D&D told by the people who were there. With a foreword by Vin Diesel and pages filled with essays and photographs, you can show your geek affiliation to those visiting relatives with pride.

30 Years of Adventure releases this month.

ABERRATIONS

The fifth *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Miniatures* set—and the first since *Harbinger* to have Starter Sets—focuses on aberrant creatures and the heroes who fight them. The set includes models from many new sources (including *Monster Manual III* and the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*) as well as beloved creatures from older books.

You'll find *Aberrations* on store shelves this month.

AMAZING STORIES

AMAZING STORIES returns, this time with a new attitude and former *DRAGON* Editor-in-Chief Dave Gross at the helm. Along with the great short stories for which the magazine has been famous since 1926, the 21st-century *Amazing* also includes features on the creators of movies, TV shows, comics, and the occasional game. For example, in issue #604 (October), *Amazing* talks with R.A. Salvatore on the creation of the *Demon Stone* video game and its connections (can you say Drizzt?) to his latest novel. Add previews of upcoming releases, dozens of reviews of the latest DVDs, books, comics, and more, and you have a monthly portal to the latest and greatest in stories and storytellers.

DVD RELEASES

D&D CARTOON ON DVD

Journey back to the mysterious Realm and join Hank, Sheila, Uni, and the others in their quest to discover their ever elusive way home . . . if you live in England (or have a region free DVD player). By the time you read this, Contender Entertainment Group (**contendergroup.com/kult-tv**) should have all the episodes already out on DVD. Companies often evaluate the success of products in England before producing them for the U.S., so Contender Entertainment Group or Rhino Entertainment (who produced the *Transformers*, *G.I. Joe*, and *Jem* DVDs) might have region 1 versions of the DVDs in the works. In any event, it looks like we'll have to wait a little longer to see cartoon bullywugs and hook horrors.

If you'd like to find out more about the D&D cartoon or its DVDs, several cool sites exist that can show you the way. For more information, check out **amazon.co.uk**, **zaksrealm.net/The_Realm.html**, or **80scartoons.co.uk**.

HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE ON DVD

Wound, meet salt. Contender Entertainment Group has also begun releasing the popular original *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* cartoon series on DVD. DVD number 6 should be available now . . . in England. English people clearly live in the future.

Find out more about the He-Man universe at **he-man.org** and **he-man.com**.

DUNDJINNI

People often email *Dragon* or *Dungeon* to learn what computer program our cartographers use to make the maps in the magazines. Unfortunately, we have to tell them that it's not a mapping program; our cartographers free-hand sketch maps, scan in drawings, and use programs like *Photoshop* and *Illustrator*. *Dungeon* Assistant Editor James Jacobs makes beautiful maps with *Campaign Cartographer*, but lacking his computer drafting skills, the rest of us put up with graph-paper paper cuts and graphite-dusted fingers.

Thankfully, *Dundjinni* now exists. *Dundjinni* presents a simple and fairly intuitive means of making maps for your games. Only slightly more difficult to use than a basic paint program, *Dundjinni* can be used to make miniatures-scale maps or overland maps. The textures and items included in the original release aren't enough to cover all your bases, but expansion downloads give you more options. Making a cool-looking map with *Dundjinni* takes a lot of time, but at least it's possible to do so without having to learn CAD or buy a $600 professional art program. For more details, check out **dundjinni.com**.

DUNGEON THIS MONTH

Dungeon #115

Check in with Monte Cook's "Dungeoncraft" and see what Wil Wheaton is up to in the second installment of "Wil Save." The "Campaign Workbook" has a host of suggestions for your game.

Raiders of Black Ice

by Wolfgang Baur

Bracing for a terrible winter, the adventurers find themselves snow-locked in the desolate Archbarony of Blackmoor. Will they venture into the treacherous Land of Black Ice to rescue an enslaved people? A D&D adventure for 3rd-level characters.

Steel Shadows

by Keith Baker

A killer is stalking the warforged of Sharn. Some say the murderer is a vengeful spirit, while others blame human bigotry and fear. Can the adventurers expose the truth that lies hidden in the depths of Sharn? A D&D Eberron adventure for 7th-level characters.

Strike on Shatterhorn

by Christopher Perkins

The pulse-pounding conclusion to the Shackled City Adventure Path was so awesomely huge we had to split it into two parts. The eleven-adventure storyline enters its penultimate chapter as the heroes track the remaining Cagewrights to the ruined yuan-ti stronghold of Shatterhorn. A D&D Shackled City Adventure Path adventure for 18th-level characters.

LETTERS

Tell us what you think of this issue. Send an email to **scalemail@paizo.com**. Please include your name, city, and state.

Dungeons and Suntan Lotion

How about a swimsuit issue? An odd request from a woman, perhaps, but I remember Marvel's swimsuit-issue comics, and they had something for everyone. I think you guys should do it. I'm not saying that chainmail bikinis would work for everyone, but surely you can get a paladin into swim trunks?

Nicole Mussen
Address withheld

Believe it or not, we've discussed this at the office. Our harebrained scheme involved making the April issue the swimsuit issue. Of course, our plan called for a beholder in a bikini bottom (perhaps with a puppy pulling it down) in addition to the requisite beefcake picture of Regdar playing volleyball and Mialee catching some rays. DRAGON *hasn't done it yet because it has never had an editor crazy enough to think that Wizards of the Coast would go for it. It still doesn't, but I'm crazy enough to ask them. Show your support (or lack thereof) for this idea by sending an email to* ***scalemail@paizo.com****.*

WotC + Paizo = D&D

I just got finished reading a relatively old update on your website, and I read something that disturbed me far more than any fiendish half-troll sahuagin ever has: "Also, starting with issue #323, the new *DRAGON* presents a bonus quarterly catalog giving you the scoop on upcoming D&D releases from Wizards of the Coast, all gathered in one place."

I've read both *DUNGEON* and *DRAGON* religiously for the past two years or so, and I've never before been bothered by any of the changes that have occurred, but I've noticed a trend lately that disturbs me. This past month in *DUNGEON*, I read an adventure that not only showcased the D&D miniatures, but also the tiles. This shameless promotion of Wizards of the Coast products irked me a little at first, because it seemed like such a waste of space—I mean, anyone can tell that miniatures are useful for D&D, and I didn't think *DUNGEON* needed to devote almost two pages to describing how to use them.

Now I read that *DRAGON* will also showcase other Wizards of the Coast material. I know that the two magazines are supporting a game that is owned by Wizards of the Coast, but as far as I know, Wizards of the Coast doesn't directly own either magazine. Why are they getting all of this space? Why not include in your quarterly catalogs previews of Ral Partha miniatures or Swords and Sorcery materials? There are lots of respectable d20 supplements out there, and I see no reason why *DRAGON* should give free advertising space to only Wizards of the Coast.

David Karlin
Address withheld

Thanks for reading, David. I'm happy to hear that you get so much use from both magazines.

Actually, Wizards of the Coast does own the magazines. Paizo licenses the right to produce them.

The catalog in DRAGON *is an extra sixteen pages added to the magazine four times a year by Wizards of the Coast. They provide it as an advertisement for their products. We're happy to include it as a resource for readers to learn what's coming out, often before they can find out from online sources.*

The d20 market offers some great products for D&D, but most print runs for such products are small (5,000 copies or less) and garner interest from a commensurately small portion of the general audience. Thus, we don't devote articles to such products (besides mentioning them in the new "First Watch" section from time to time). Of course, if Ral Partha or Sword and Sorcery Studios wanted to buy 16 pages of advertising, we'd be happy to include it!

Thanks, Doug

I'm a thirty-year-old, middle-class male. I was born when TSR was being formed. I was teething on the red D&D basic box. Girls were gross during AD&D. I started dating around the time second edition came out. I became engaged at 3.0 and married at 3.5. Wizards of the Coast has taken a lot of flak since the changeover from

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FUNNY FACES

Need a picture of your character or of an NPC? Check out the face maker at **channel4.com/entertainment/tv/microsites/Y/your-face/index.html.**

That overly long web address leads you to a face creator that visitors usually use to create faces that mimic those of movie and TV stars, but you can use it to depict your D&D character. The website not only allows you to choose from a host of facial features, but you can also change their dimensions, creating bigger smiles or bushier eyebrows as you see fit, and even move them about the face.

Dragon Talk

TSR for being greedy and for revamping things purely for the cash, but I have witnessed a constant upward movement in the quality of the D&D line. Each edition gets better and fills in the gaps from the previous edition. Keep up the good work. I love Dragon magazine more than ever.

Douglas Hendrickson
Memphis, TN

PUT ON YOUR FLAK JACKETS!

I recently read your "open letter to readers." I hadn't read it earlier because I quit getting both magazines when you switched to third edition, or 3.5, or whatever the hell it's up to now. I have to say, Wizards of the Coast inspires a lot of brand loyalty when they tell gamers they have to upgrade to a new set of rulebooks. People just love to throw out things that they've invested time and money in.

So you're going to "relaunch" the magazines? *Dragon* becomes a 100-page advertisement for Wizards of the Cost with two scoops of raisins in every issue.

I suppose it would be asking too much to even consider the gamers who supported the magazine in the past by offering material for older versions of D&D, because to a lot of gamers, we didn't leave the game, the game left us. We're still playing *our* version. We bought enough material in the past to tide us over until the next time the company changes hands.

If you want to generate business, maybe you need to think about the past instead of repeating mistakes your predecessors made. I hope your endeavor in recycling is as successful as organized play relaunching Ravens Bluff.

Vince Lehto
Address withheld

Yay, Vince is back! It's been a while since Dragon received a letter from Vince Lehto (A.K.A. Vince Lethal). We thought he'd stopped caring.

We like Vince's letters because he has a way with words. The sarcasm drips from his letter and splashes to the floor!

Vince has an axe to grind with Wizards of the Coast (as if you couldn't tell), but he brings up point of policy that's worth explaining: Dragon doesn't support older editions of the game. Each issue of the magazine features many articles that can be used regardless of edition, but you won't see any second edition statistics for monsters or first edition descriptions of spells.

The reason for that policy is simple: Dragon exists to serve you, D&D players, and the majority of D&D players use the new edition of the rules. Including articles for older editions would turn away more readers than it would garner.

LAMINATION LAMENTATION

I don't play *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* and have never given the idea much thought one way or the other, but the giant map in issue #322 made me reconsider!

The map caught my eye right away because it was huge. After finishing an excellent—and timely—issue on playing in the dark, I unfolded my bookmark and read the scenario and examined the map. Oh, yes—this was one to be laminated in short order.

You see, while your cartographer and writer might have envisioned a dead dragon and rival plunderers, I saw something else entirely. I saw gladiators. I saw dragons—live ones who capture and enslave foolhardy would-be looters and force them into arenas to fight for their own amusement and profit. The hoard map just screamed "Arena!" to me. Perhaps it's time to divert some of my own hoard to the D&D miniatures game.

Speaking of diverting my hoard, I have a tiny complaint about the sheer size of the map. Would it be possible to aim for 24-inch-wide posters in *Dragon*? It would sure keep my laminating costs down!

As for the timeliness of a darkness-themed issue: The week before issue #322 arrived, I was verbally "revisiting" a dream campaign of mine based on an inverted D&D-style world where the good guys live in the Underdark, and the bad guys rule the surface and slink in the shadows. With issue #322 and its theme of playing in the dark landing in my lap so close on the heels of the most recent "skull-session" over the setting, I might get serious about making it work.

All in all, issue #322 wasn't just a "useful" issue that would help me play, it was an issue that makes me want to play and explore new directions as I do.

Now, if only I'd had that wonderful "Ecology of the Dark Ones" article when I ran the first Shackled City adventure from *Dungeon*.

Michael McNeill
Eros, LA

DRAGON LADY

I've been a die-hard gamer for about nine years, and in that time I have always pushed the DM to the limit on high-powered monster characters. I love the way the new edition addresses monster races and how Mike McArtor handled metallic dragon PCs in *Dragon* #320. However, I can identify with all the fans who were disappointed the chromatic dragons were excluded. I understand that not many DMs are as

?

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

To what does "Bazaar of the Bizarre" refer?

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Cloud Kingdom Games

This issue's Riddle:

Our assault started
At the beginning of time
A tireless army
Marching in line.
As each of us dies
Our reinforcement makes breach
Millions of warriors
Invading the beach.

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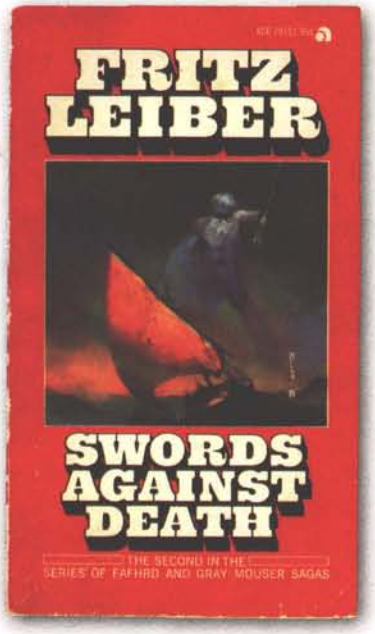
liberal as mine (since he is my fiancé), but all DMs must see the benefit of having chromatic dragon level progressions to use as enemies. I have a personal stake in this petition: Teslaverina, a very young female black dragon, with whom I aspire to conquer nations. I even considered using my guest account to email you about a hundred times, each under a different address. I really believe that coming out with a sequel article that covers the chromatic dragons would be well received by the fans. I know I would appreciate it! As ever, I patiently await the next installment of *Dragon*, the best source of gaming material anywhere!

Tracy Tate
Address withheld

The people have spoken! We received more than the usual amount of email last month, and most people sent emails to support seeing the chromatic dragons as monster level progressions. Assistant Editor Mike McArtor is writing the follow-up article to "Dragon Player Characters," but it might be a while before it appears in the magazine. (Turning the dragon stats for each age category into a unified level progression is complicated!) Keep your eyes on the previews of future issues, which appear next to "From the Editor," to see when it's coming up.



? KNOWLEDGE CHECK ANSWER

It refers to the old magic item articles in *Dragon*, of course, but it's also the title to one of Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser stories.

Who is Fritz Leiber? One of the old masters of fantasy fiction. D&D owes a lot to Leiber, just as it owes much to J. R. R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard, Michael Moorcock, Jack Vance, and H. P. Lovecraft. How much did these authors contribute to D&D? Check out "The Shadow Over Dungeons & Dragons" in this issue to learn more about H. P. Lovecraft, then go to your local library or bookstore to find out more.

ONE BRICK TO RULE THEM ALL

Dragon Talk

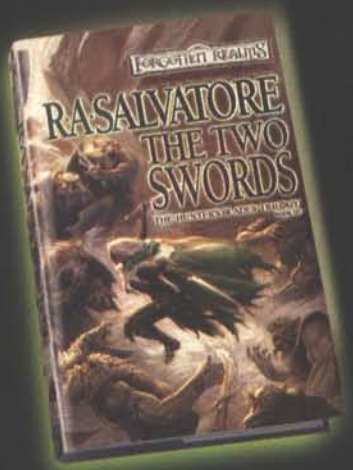
Lego has revitalized its popular Lego castle series with an all new look and the most in-depth backstory ever. Knights' Kingdom, which takes place in the land of Morcia, introduces sets not only for Lego's ever-popular minifigures, but also a set for each of the five knights (good and evil) in a larger scale on par with Lego Technic's popular Bionicle line.

Knights' Kingdom offers plenty for D&D players. Morcia has a rich story line incorporated into the entire product assortment that tells of a kingdom taken over by the Dark Knight, Vladek. A band of heroic Knights (Danju, Jayko, Rascus, and Santis), each with his own special "quest ability," must embark on a daring mission to find the heart of the mythical Shield of Ages—the one item that can help the Knights defeat Vladek in a grand tournament—and take it back their homeland. Sound like a campaign? You bet! The world of Knights' Kingdom also includes cool place names, like the Citadel of Orlan and the Desolate Moorlands.

Need more of a draw? How about detailed sets with cool buildings (of a scale usable with D&D miniatures, no less) including a castle with elements that can be turned from good to evil to reflect a change in rulers? Every set also includes three cards usable in a collectable card game similar to the playing card game, War.

The initial offering of ten sets (five in each scale) is available now at **shop.lego.com** and your local retail establishment. Now if we could just get Mike to put his Legos down long enough to get some work done around here . . .

It Ends Here.



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THE SCOOP ON GAMER LIFE

SURVEY SAYS?

In 1998, 77% of the respondents to our reader survey were 25 years old or older, and 6% were female. In our survey of 2002, we found that 53% of respondents were 25 years old or older, and 5% were female.

What does that tell us? Some portion of our readers found the Fountain of Youth, and they're not sharing, and no one plays D&D with the *girdle of feminity/masculinity* anymore.

Give us some real data by taking our new survey at **paizo.com/dragon**. Let us know what you like and don't like. Tell us about yourself and your gaming habits, so we can continue to give you the greatest in gaming. You don't have to be a subscriber. If you read DRAGON, we want to know what you think about it.

To all of DRAGON's female readers: We know there are more of you out there. Jump online and show your gamer pride.

PLAY YOUR D&D AND EAT IT TOO

A letter from Jeremy Mauer:

My friend, Kevin Stinyard, married on June 25th. At the suggestion of the bride, the groom's cake was decorated as a Player's Handbook. *The full cake was done with hardened sugar for the gems and thick chocolate for the cover. As a special treat, they included dice hand carved from white chocolate.*

When it came time to cut the cake, even the non-gamers called for it to be spared! Well, the cake did get eaten, and it tasted damn good too. Here are some pictures of the cake and one of Kevin and Amy cutting it. Kevin is a gamer, and Amy is a strong supporter, allowing our rather large group to use their house for regular games.

Dice carved from white chocolate? Brilliant! Give the baker of that cake a prize and Kevin and Amy our congratulations! That cake is fantastic, by every meaning of the word.

ME DRAGON, YOU JANE

Jane, the hip magazine for women under 30, ran a brief article about DUNGEONS & DRAGONS in its June/July issue. Alas, D&D only received attention because of the d20 *Book of Erotic Fantasy*, but hey, in the first sentence the author admitted to having friends who play D&D, and she didn't wisecrack about D&D players being unable to get laid until the last sentence. We're moving up in the world!

If you get a copy and want to check it out, you'll find the article on page 117, just above *Jane's* review of various forms of female contraceptives.

A MATCH MADE IN A DUNGEON

A letter from Rebecca Kinraide of Madison, Wisconsin:

My husband and I have both been gamers for over twenty years, and we met each other through gaming seven years ago. It was therefore natural that we would include gaming elements in our wedding last October. By far what got the most attention were the wedding cakes. In addition to the large sheet cake decorated like a gaming mat, complete with miniatures to represent the wedding party, I made six cakes shaped like the six basic D&D dice. (In order to make those cakes, I had to commission a metal worker to create special pans.) We thought other readers of DRAGON *might enjoy seeing that when geeks marry, they don't have to settle for normal, boring, or traditional. They can have their dice and eat them too.*

Congratulations, Rebecca and Akira, and happy anniversary!

Those cakes look awesome. I'm marrying a gamer (my finacee of two years, Helen Wojciechowski) this month, and we're both envious of your cool cakes. I bet other gamers are too.

Hey, if you still have those oddly shaped cake pans, you might have a tidy business. . . .

Matthew Sernett

RPGA UPDATE

by Ian Richards
RPGA Program Manager

The RPGA wants to enhance your roleplaying experience, so you can play more, with more people, and receive rewards for the games you already love. Last month's "RPGA Update" gave a general overview of what the RPGA does, so let's pick up where we left off.

How Do I Join?

The RPGA allows different levels of participation: general membership (sometimes referred to as player membership) and game master (GM) membership. Whichever you choose, and you can be both, you must be a member to participate in all the fun. Membership is free, and you don't have to worry about continually renewing—it's good forever. Get started by going to the RPGA website at **rpga.com**.

With the general membership, you are eligible to play in RPGA-sanctioned events all over the world. With the GM membership, not only are you eligible to play in RPGA-sanctioned events, you can GM games at those events, download free RPGA adventures, and even host your own events. This last option is a great way to build gaming groups in your area, especially when you team up with a local retailer using the D&D Campaigns retail kits.

What Can I Do?

The RPGA presents several event types, and the best way to find an RPGA-sanctioned event is to check the online Events Calendar.

Home Play: Home play is exactly what it says. Play your home game with gaming content we provide. Play RPGA adventures, and earn real treasures from D&D Rewards with your regular gaming group.

Game Days: These public gatherings, usually one-day events at a retail location, are devoted to playing games. Anyone can play, and RPGA members are always welcome to participate.

Conventions: Conventions feature dealer rooms, auctions, seminars, workshops, award ceremonies, early or exclusive access to new adventures, and other special features, but they also often offer RPGA events.

What Do I Get?

With D&D Rewards, you amass reward points every time you participate in RPGA-sanctioned games. When event results are reported, the RPGA records your points in its database. Your points accumulate over predetermined intervals called durations, and after each duration, your points are totaled, and we mail you some gaming goodies. Although this program and its treasures are free, you must register for D&D Rewards to participate. Players and GMs both earn points for their participation.

Players earn points toward campaign cards—full-color, collectable, gaming cards granting unique character creation and play possibilities.

GMs earn points toward special game templates, RPGA-exclusive D&D miniatures, and *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* expansion packs.

What are the D&D Campaigns Retail Kits?

D&D Campaigns refers to a retail support program for *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* events and roleplaying events. Each month, a new D&D Campaigns season begins, and a new retailer kit is released. The kit contains materials to support up to twelve players for skirmish play or twenty-one players for a roleplaying session (one GM and four to six players at three tables). Since retailers can order up to four kits per month, we include instructions on combining kits to support many more players if necessary.

Each kit contains two season posters; twelve unique terrain tiles; seven promotional miniatures; three spell-effect templates; the copies of a new roleplaying adventure; tournament, league, and roleplaying paperwork; reporting forms; and a D&D Campaigns newsletter. The kit is available to retailers through the Wizards of the Coast direct sales department.

What About D&D Minatures Games?

The RPGA, in conjunction with the DCI (the organization that runs official *Magic* tournaments), now supports *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* skirmishes through league and tournament play.

Leagues are casual *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* skirmish events. The typical league runs a two-hour session each week for a predetermined period, usually a month. Participants earn points each time they play at a session. At the end of the month, the players' points are totaled to determine a victor and prizes are awarded.

Tournaments are more competitive *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* skirmish events. They are typically limited to a single day of play. Participants battle in a series of consecutive games based on their win-loss records. After the final match, the victor is declared and prizes doled out.

How Do I Find Out More?

If you want to know more about how you can get involved in the RPGA's exciting activities, read more at the RPGA website, **rpga.com**.

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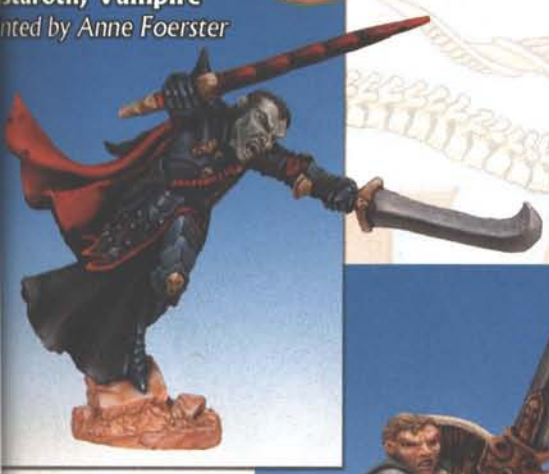

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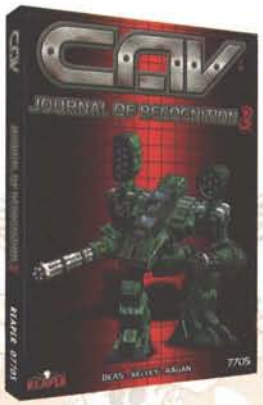

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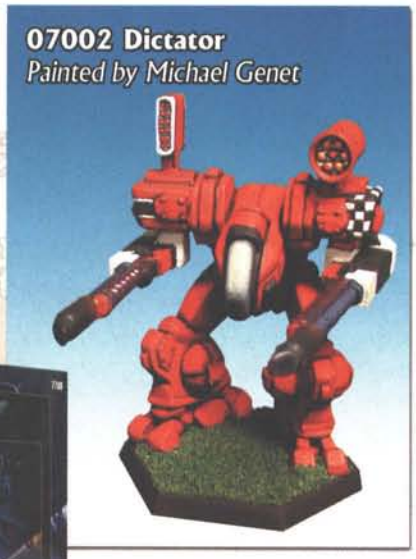

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REAPER MINIATURES REAPER MINIATURES

by Mike Mearls
images provided by Wizards of the Coast

Aspect of Orcus

ASPECTS OF TERROR

The *Archfiends* expansion for the *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* game blew the roof off the power curve. With 200-point games now a viable option, plenty of nasty critters can join warbands to torment your opponents and grind their miniatures into the map grid. The aspects—living shards of a god's power—are the stars of the set, while heavy hitters like the Bone Devil, Erinyes, Silver Dragon, and Vrock can all single handedly take on a 100-point warband.

This article presents some new scenarios that focus on these powerful figures for both your D&D miniatures and roleplaying games. Designed as fun alternatives to the standard miniatures game, most of these scenarios involve a fair dose of luck, making them better suited to casual games than tournament play. In addition, three or more players make for the best game play with these scenarios, although all of them are playable by two. Use the standard rules from the *Miniatures Handbook* for playing games with more than two players.

PROWLING MONSTERS

Several of these scenarios include powerful monsters that attack each player's warband with equal ferocity. These simple rules allow you to play games on battlegrounds already overrun by creatures without giving either side an advantage.

Prowling monsters are any creatures on the battle grid not members of any player's warband. Such monsters use a simple set of rules to govern their activation, movement, and attacks. Keep in mind that prowlers work best in casual games and that no set of rules can perfectly cover every situation. If any doubt arises regarding a creature's actions, take a vote of the players or resolve it by having each player roll 1d20, with the highest rolling player making the judgment call. In the D&D roleplaying game, you might use similar rules of behavior to manage large numbers of monsters or to create encounters where creatures in the area hold no stake in the fight but might

Medium Fire Elemental

become embroiled in it. For example, if a gang of orcs attacks the PCs near a kobold lair, the kobolds might attack either group if they perceive them as a threat to their lair.

The player who won initiative chooses who gets to move the prowling creatures first. This position rotates around the table in a clockwise direction. Players make all choices for a prowling figure, but they must obey the rules that govern a prowler's behavior.

Prowling creatures activate two at a time. They take their turn after the last player to go on the current round. The prowling creatures with the lowest cost activate first. In case of a tie, choose one at random. Players continue moving prowling creatures until all of them activate.

Prowling Monster Rules

A prowling monster normally acts like a difficult creature that considers all warband members its foes. However, if it cannot see an opponent, it moves in as straight a line as possible toward the center of the nearest terrain tile and stops once it reaches that destination. If it starts its move at the center of a tile, it moves toward the center of the second-nearest tile. A prowling monster doesn't remember its path, so it might simply move back and forth between two tiles. If it ends its move between two tiles, on its next action it moves toward the nearest one, even if it heads back toward where it started.

Aspect of Lolth

If a prowling monster possesses any beneficial spells, it casts them on itself rather than move if no targets are in its line of sight. A creature never casts a spell more than once unless the effects stack. For example, a prowling Cleric of Lathander never casts *magic weapon* on himself more than once.

A prowling monster always uses its most damaging attack, whether it be ranged or melee. If it possesses spells, it casts its highest-level offensive spells first.

Abyssal Eviscerator

If a prowling monster fails a morale save, it flees toward a randomly determined corner of the map. A prowling monster never gains the benefits of Commander Effects, even from other prowlers with Commander ratings.

Prowling monsters fall into one of the three following categories. Using these different possibilities for prowling creatures allows you to create your own scenarios or build on the examples given here.

Guardian: Sometimes, a prowling creature guards a location. These creatures stay within an area of the grid. They never move more than 12 squares away from a set spot on the map, such as the middle 2 squares at the center of a terrain tile. This location is specified at the beginning of a scenario. A guardian might use ranged attacks against opponents, but it never leaves its location to attack. A guardian that comes under attack from ranged spells or weapons moves to break line of sight with its attacker or gain cover if it lacks ranged abilities capable of reaching the attacker.

Sentinel: Rather than move between terrain tiles, the sentinel moves through a specific sequence of spots on the grid. Pick at least two squares on the grid and number them, starting from 1 and proceeding along the sentinel's path. A sentinel always moves toward the nearest designated spot and, once it reaches it, moves to the next numbered spot. For example, a sentinel that reaches square 3 then moves to square 4. A sentinel attacks its opponents as normal, but once it no longer has any visible opponents, it moves to the nearest spot on its path and starts the sequence over again.

Slayer: A prowling slayer attacks a specific type of creature. Pick a single creature type. If you select humanoid, select a subtype. The prowling creature attacks the nearest opponent of that type, ignoring closer foes. If it does not see the chosen type, it acts as normal.

The Scenarios

The scenarios here are designed for both *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* and the D&D roleplaying game. The majority of the figures listed for each come from the *Archfiends* expansion set, although you might substitute figures with the same point cost (or CR) if they aren't part of your collection. For the miniatures game, these scenarios should serve as templates. They add additional complications and dangers to whatever scenario

Vrock

Erinyes

you use them with. The roleplaying game material describes an encounter that you might insert into an adventure or as part of a larger dungeon crawl.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Sometimes, it's all about perspective. When warbands meet to do battle, they might think their struggle is of unquestioned importance. However, sometimes a fight between two groups of warriors is little more than a diversion from the true battle at hand. In this scenario, the players' warbands stumble into the battleground of two groups of rival outsiders. They must fight to defeat each other and sidestep the conflict around them.

Miniatures

Select a scenario as normal. In addition, both players create a 200-point warband that consists of outsiders and elementals. This warband must include at least one figure that costs 70 points or more. Here are two sample warbands you might use as examples:

Chaotic Evil: Abyssal Eviscerator, Aspect of Orcus, Vrock.

Lawful Evil: Aspect of Lolth, Dretch (x3), Erinyes, Medium Fire Elemental.

These warbands consist entirely of prowling monsters that act as slayers hunting enemy outsiders. Each player sets up these creatures in the corner of the map grid adjacent to the location of her entry tile. On their turns, both warbands of prowling monsters move toward the center of the map. This route inevitably ends in the two warbands attacking each other, but they also attack members of player-controlled warbands that come within their line of sight. Play proceeds as per the rules given for prowlers and whatever scenario you choose to play.

If you score points for eliminating enemy models in the scenario, you gain half the normal points if an opponent's model falls to a member of either outsider warband. Otherwise, use the scenario's special rules and victory conditions as normal.

Dretch

Roleplaying

Using the basic guidelines of this scenario adds an additional challenge to almost any encounter. The PCs might need to hide as two aspects battle each other or an orc tribe battles a mob of gnolls. Each group should consist of creatures that total an EL equal to the party's level +1.

When using this encounter, give the PCs plenty of cover to hide behind. This scenario works best when the characters must hurry to defeat an opponent or move through an area. Perhaps the party runs into the battle while leaving a dungeon. Already battered and injured, they cannot afford to stop and fight. If the characters must take their opponent alive, the presence of a second, unrelated combat makes things much more interesting.

Combat Zone

A battle erupts in an area already thick with bystanders. The creatures caught on the battlefield seek to avoid the fighting, but they take cover in terrain that both sides might try to exploit for a tactical advantage. If left alone, they stay out of the fight, but if provoked, they might prove the difference between victory and defeat.

Miniatures

Set up the game as you would for any scenario. After all players set their warbands on the grid, populate the area with native monsters. Each terrain tile is home to a strange monster that fights to defend its lair. Roll d% for each tile and consult the Combat Zone Prowling Creatures chart to determine the monster that resides there. These creatures act as guardian prowling monsters tied to the two squares at the center of their corresponding terrain tile. You score no points for defeating a prowling monster, but your opponents score half the normal points (depending on the scenario) if you lose a figure to one.

Roleplaying

When the characters stop to rest at a tavern, they find themselves under attack from a gang of bandits. These thugs could serve a recurring villain from your campaign, or they might simply want to rob travelers who come through the area. The gang consists of the following miniatures from *Archfiends:* a Cultist of the Dragon, a Half-Orc Barbarian, and two Zhentarim Fighters. When patrons sit down to eat dinner at the tavern or inn, the bandits strike, counting on the chaos and confusion to hinder the PCs. After all, the villains have no compunction against striking down innocents. Use four Sages and four Dalelands Militia figures to represent the bystanders. One of them is actually a Wereboar—choose a figure at random and replace it with the Wereboar if the figure suffers damage. During the fight, these bystanders take cover behind tables and chairs, but if caught in a

Combat Zone Prowling Creatures

D%	Creature	Number Appearing
1 – 20	Warrior Skeleton	2d4
21 – 40	Duergar Warrior	1d6
41 – 50	Gnoll Archer	1d6
51 – 60	Nothic	1d3
61 – 70	Young Minotaur	1d2
71 – 80	Dread Guard	1d2
81 – 87	Wereboar	1d2
88 – 93	Ochre Jelly	1d2
94 – 96	Abyssal Eviscerator	1
97 – 100	Hill Giant	1

spell's area of effect or if they take damage for any reason, they attack the closest character or bandit. If either side comes within 4 squares of a bystander, roll 1d4 and consult the reaction table below.

d4	Reaction
1	Attacks the nearest bandit or PC.
2	Moves from cover to find a safe position (DM's choice).
3	Stumbles between a bandit and PC, offering the combatants cover from one another.
4	Moves at random through the tavern.

The Summoning Circle

A band of cultists have gathered to summon an aspect of Demogorgon from the outer planes. Unfortunately, the cultists decided to hold their ceremony on the site of a skirmish battle.

Miniatures

This scenario makes use of five Sage miniatures as the cultists. You might substitute other miniatures, such as the Cultist of the Dragon, if you don't have enough Sages. Place a Statue Room terrain card in the center of the battle grid. The players take turns placing the Sages on the tile until they are all in place. Sages must stand on the terrain tile, and they cannot be adjacent to each other. Each player places two tiles on the board in addition to an entry tile. Each turn, the Sages summon a creature that appears on the Statue Room tile. This creature acts as a basic prowling monster. It ignores the Sages and instead attacks the warbands. In addition to gaining full points for killing miniatures from enemy warbands, players score 20 points for each sage killed and points equal to half the miniature's cost for killing summoned outsiders.

The Sages continue to summon monsters as long as any of them live. Creatures appear each round in this order: two Abyssal Eviscerators, one Bone Devil, one Vrock, and one Aspect of Demogorgon. The Sages count as Chaotic Evil for this scenario, but the creatures they summon use their alignments as normal. The Sages never move as they conduct their ceremony, and in their fanatic devotion to Demogorgon, they ignore all threats. They count as fearless and automatically succeed at all morale saves. If somehow routed, they try to escape to a random entry area. If a Sage escapes, no one gains the points for destroying it. The scenario ends when either all the warbands are destroyed or the Sages are slain or routed from the table.

Roleplaying

A small sect dedicated to the worship of Demogorgon has uncovered the Book of Duality, a tome that includes the ritual needed to call an Aspect of Demogorgon into the world. Awakened in the middle of the night by a small group of frantic church leaders and military officials, the PCs receive news of this dreadful event. The townsfolk beseech the characters to halt the ceremony, which takes place in under an hour. The characters might need to use magic to arrive at the ceremonial chamber, a massive cavern beneath the city, or they might take a skiff through the sewers.

Set up a battle grid from the miniatures games with the Statue Room in the middle. Place four more terrain tiles of your choice on the map, with one tile directly between the Statue Room and each side of the map.

Four Sages conduct the ceremony in the statue room. In addition, a Vrock, two Abyssal Eviscerators, and two Yuan-ti Purebloods guard the approach. These foul creatures serve Demogorgon and hope to help shepherd the aspect into existence. When the characters arrive, they have 5 rounds until the aspect arrives. It appears in the center of the statue room. Luckily, it first attacks the sages, but once it devours them, it attacks the characters.

If the PCs defeat the monsters, they uncover a copy of the Book of Duality. From notes in the book, they discover that there other cults lurking throughout the region seeking to call Aspects of Demogorgon. If enough of them succeed, the foul demon lord will arrive on the Material Plane to wreak havoc across the land.

The cultists and their demonic allies make an EL 11 encounter.

by F. Wesley Schneider
images provided by Piranha Bytes

GOTHIC II

The Sleeper, an unnatural hell-beast you battled against in the original *Gothic*, met defeat. Drawn shrieking back into the nightmare void that spawned it, its final enraged howls give birth to the plot of *Gothic II*.

You soon find that the abomination's howls were not merely shrieks of rage, but words of power. Spoken in the language of all monstrosities, these otherworldly cries sounded over the entire world, binding all evil things to obey these terrible words. Thus, with the death of one of the greatest among them, the monsters of the world rise, forging an army to lay siege to the world of men.

Naturally, only you can stop them.

From the first moments of your quest when you reawaken in a necromancer's tower, untold options, freedom, and magic are available to you. Whether the first scrolls of healing you stumble across or the alchemical ingredients and formulas available throughout the game, magic acts as an ever-present ally on your quest. Yet no other arcane option in *Gothic II's* magic system shows its power and versatility more clearly than the use of runes.

RUNES

Runes are arcane or divine symbols that, like scrolls, create magical effects when read. In *Gothic II*, anyone can draw upon the power of runes, effectively casting spells by invoking one of these symbols of power. Runes commonly appear as a single, detailed symbol carved into a fist-sized stone or inked upon a sheet of vellum, although some might take other forms. Whether a *rune of fireball* actually looks like a streaking fireball or nothing more than a series of complex markings varies from rune to rune.

This article presents everything you need to create and use runes in your own D&D game and presents several examples of the most widely used and useful spells that runes can hold.

USING RUNES

Any creature that touches a rune gains full knowledge of what magic the symbol holds, how it works, what the limitations are, and how to active it, conveyed as a command word and instinctual details spoken directly to the rune holder's mind. Activating a rune requires a standard action as the bearer holds the rune and speaks its command word. Upon doing so, the rune's spell is cast as if by a spellcaster of the rune's caster level. Once invoked, the rune disappears from whatever surface bore it, and it cannot be used again.

ETCH RUNE [ITEM CREATION]

You can create runes.

Prerequisite: Scribe Scroll.

Benefit: You can create a rune of any spell you know. Scribing a rune takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price. The base price of a rune equals its spell level × caster level × 75 gp. To etch a rune, you must spend 1/25 of this base price in XP and use up raw materials costing one-half of this base price.

Any rune that stores a spell with a costly material component or an XP cost also carries a commensurate cost. In addition to the costs derived from

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Gothic II and its predecessor present a world that could easily fit into any traditional D&D fantasy setting. Filled with powerful magic users, terrible monsters, and a population of diverse and interesting people, *Gothic II* presents a world ready for exploration.

The game provides dozens of options from the very first moments. Given a character who is essentially a clean slate, you choose and develop his skills and abilities and select from any of a hundred different paths and adventures. As you progress, you eventually gain the option to take on a more specialized "prestigious" class that opens up new, more powerful options and abilities. This, combined with familiar skills that allow your character to do things like pick locks, create potions, and take trophies from fallen foes, give the feel and freedom of an ongoing D&D campaign.

Gothic II's diversity doesn't end with your character. Monsters and villains throughout the game come in a wide variety and seem to have as many options as the hero. Standard orcs don't exist in this game; while one orc might operate as a lowly fighter, the next could be a powerful spellcaster. Of course, orcs aren't as fearsome as the trolls, shadowbeasts, or dragons you must face before you complete your quest.

With hundreds of choices for your character and thousands of NPCs from whom you never know what to expect, *Gothic II* provides the perfect fix for diehard D&D players who can't wait until their next game session to go adventuring.

the base price, you must expend the material component or pay the XP when scribing the rune.

Sample Rune Descriptions

These sample rune descriptions can be used either as new magic items or as examples to help you create your own runes.

Rune of Banishment: Holy images and orthodox verses cover the face of this rectangular silver plaque while, at its center, a relief of a heavily armored saint plunges a spear into a demonic serpent. As you grasp the image, the faint echo of a dying roar seems to murmur through the air.

Moderate abjuration; CL 11th; Etch Rune, *banishment;* Price 4,950 gp.

Rune of Cure Serious Wounds: This smooth wooden disk dangles from a tattered cord of worn leather. Its splintering surface is painted with the image of a three-pronged drop of blood that glistens as if still wet.

Faint conjuration; CL 5th; Etch Rune, *cure moderate wounds;* Price 1,125 gp.

Rune of Dispel Magic: A complex, starburstlike pattern, still surrounded by jagged shards of glass, glimmers within the frame of this broken mirror. The reflective symbol seems to consist of splinters of the shattered mirror, although its not obvious how they remain attached.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Etch Rune, *dispel magic;* Price 1,125 gp.

Rune of Enervation: Singed into this yellowed wolf's skull is a disturbing mark of an angular death's head. The grim brand feels cool to the touch, but faint wisps of acrid smoke periodically rise from the macabre image.

Moderate necromancy; CL 7th; Etch Rune, *enervation;* Price 2,100 gp.

Rune of Magic Missile: The stylized image of a sleek winged dart is etched upon this egg-shaped blue-gray stone. Although as hard as normal granite, the rock hums faintly and sporadically vibrates and twitches as if something living buzzed inside.

Faint divination; CL 1st; Etch Rune, *magic missile;* Price 75 gp.

Rune of Telekinesis: This foot-wide square of yellow cloth bears the stain of a clutching, black handprint. Although the fabric appears delicate, it has a surprising weight to it, but not as though the material is heavy, more like some force constantly tries to pull it away.

Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Etch Rune, *telekinesis;* Price 3,375 gp.

Rune of True Strike: This curve of scrap iron looks like a piece of a sundered metal shield. Deliberate scores cover one side with a pattern of countless gashes, each almost piercing the ruined metal, yet the whole retains a strength and sturdiness despite the scars.

Faint divination; CL 1st; Etch Rune, *true strike;* Price 75 gp.

COMMON RUNES

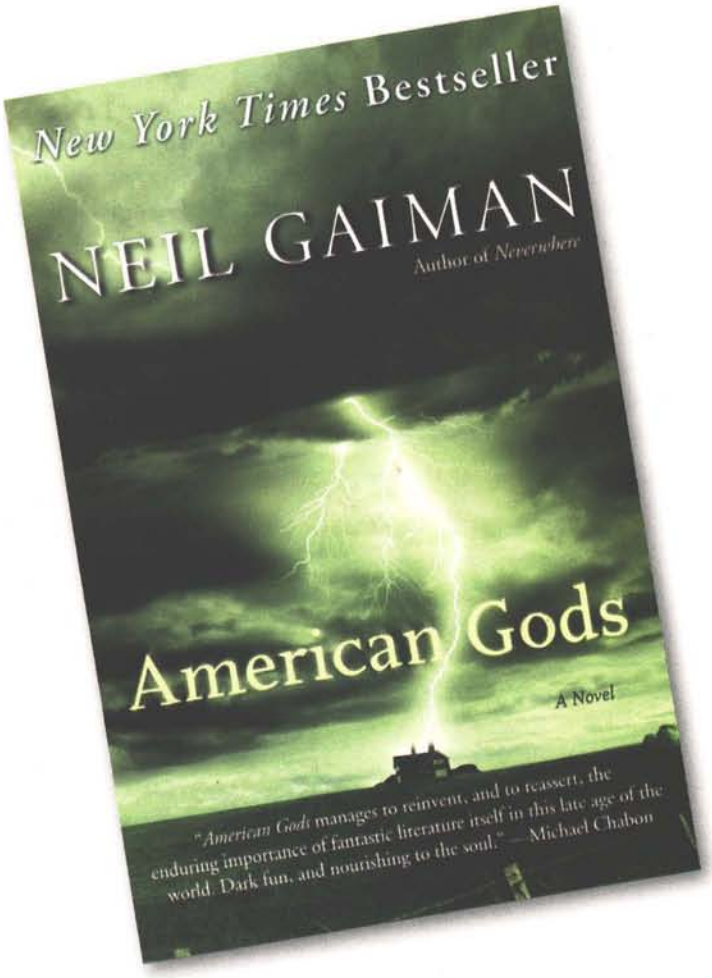
Rune	Price
0-Level Spells	
Create water	37 gp
Cure minor wounds	37 gp
Dancing lights	37 gp
Detect magic	37 gp
Detect poison	37 gp
Flare	37 gp
Guidance	37 gp
Mage hand	37 gp
Purify food and drink	37 gp
Virtue	37 gp
1st-Level Spells	
Burning hands	75 gp
Cure light wounds	75 gp
Entangle	75 gp
Identify	175 gp
Mage armor	75 gp
Magic missile	75 gp
Magic weapon	75 gp
Sanctuary	75 gp
Shield	75 gp
Sleep	75 gp
2nd-Level Spells	
Aid	450 gp
Alter self	450 gp
Barkskin	450 gp
Blur	450 gp
Cat's grace	450 gp
Darkness	450 gp
Flame blade	450 gp
Glitterdust	450 gp
Knock	450 gp
Web	450 gp

Rune	Price
3rd-Level Spells	
Call lightning	1,125 gp
Daylight	1,125 gp
Fireball	1,125 gp
Gaseous form	1,125 gp
Prayer	1,125 gp
Protection from energy	1,125 gp
Remove blindness/deafness	1,125 gp
Remove disease	1,125 gp
Stinking cloud	1,125 gp
Waterwalk	1,125 gp
4th-Level Spells	
Air walk	2,100 gp
Bestow curse	2,100 gp
Charm monster	2,100 gp
Divination	2,125 gp
Freedom of movement	2,100 gp
Holy sword	2,100 gp
Ice storm	2,100 gp
Polymorph	2,100 gp
Restoration	2,200 gp
Tongues	2,100 gp
5th-Level Spells	
Baleful polymorph	3,375 gp
Break enchantment	3,375 gp
Cloudkill	3,375 gp
Flame strike	3,375 gp
Raise dead	8,375 gp
Teleport	3,375 gp
Wall of stone	3,375 gp
Wall of thorns	3,375 gp

Rune	Price
6th-Level Spells	
Analyze dweomer	4,950 gp
Bull's strength, mass	4,950 gp
Find the path	4,950 gp
Heal	4,950 gp
Liveoak	4,950 gp
True seeing	5,200 gp
7th-Level Spells	
Creeping doom	6,825 gp
Delayed blast fireball	6,825 gp
Destruction	7,325 gp
Finger of death	6,825 gp
Power word blind	6,825 gp
Resurrection	16,825 gp
8th-Level Spells	
Earthquake	9,000 gp
Holy word	9,000 gp
Planar ally, greater	11,500 gp
Polar ray	9,000 gp
Prismatic wall	9,000 gp
Symbol of death	14,000 gp
Trap the soul	9,000 gp
9th-Level Spells	
Etherealness	11,475 gp
Gate	16,475 gp
Heal, mass	11,475 gp
Power word kill	11,475 gp
Shapechange	11,475 gp
Wish	36,475 gp

by F. Wesley Schneider

AMERICAN GODS


New York Times Bestseller
NEIL GAIMAN
Author of Neverwhere
American Gods
A Novel
"American Gods manages to reinvent, and to reassert, the enduring importance of fantastic literature itself in this late age of the world. Dark fun, and nourishing to the soul." — Michael Chabon

American Gods, by Neil Gaiman, tells the tale of a centuries-long conflict between the gods of ancient myth and the modern deities replacing them. America becomes their battlefield, as it acts as a volatile divine melting pot, home to generations of immigrants who brought their stories, beliefs, monsters, and gods with them.

The story follows the travels of Shadow, a good-hearted ex-con whom fate left homeless and without a family. Hired by Mr. Wednesday, a glass-eyed, swindling former deity who's fallen on hard times, Shadow becomes embroiled in the struggle of the ancient gods. Zigzagging across the country, the unlikely pair struggle to rally mythological allies to join their fight against the modern pantheon's new deities, such as Media, the techno-boy, and Mr. World. Through their travels, Shadow finds the world's thin veil of the mundane lifted away, revealing the mythical creatures and ex-gods we pass on the streets every day.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

American Gods is the sequel to every myth you've ever read. Spanning cultures and continents, the book resurrects the fallible gods of old and brings their modern lives to light. Aside from the cutting wit, epic conventions, and brilliant storytelling of this modern myth, *American Gods* contains a treasure trove of ideas for D&D players and DMs alike.

For players, the story presents a heroic inspiration: a single man, caught up in the devices of the gods, both old and new. Roguish tricks, fantastic schemes, and quick thinking make this book a veritable guide to dealing with the divine. For tricky players, Shadow's coin tricks and swift deceptions should give your next Slight of Hands check more than a little added flair. Characters with sharp tongues might benefit from the gods' witty verbal duels and divine cons. Take some pointers from the hundreds of heroic—and not so heroic—displays throughout the tale, and learn a good deal about how to behave when dealing with the most powerful beings in creation.

As for Dungeon Masters, *American Gods* offers hundreds of views of how deities interact with mortals and presents an interesting look at deities in their declining years. Throughout the story, gods like the morticians Mr. Ibis and Mr. Jackal, spidery Mr. Nancy, and morbid Chernobog, disguise their lives in America. As in ancient mythology, adopting this kind of direct godly interaction with mortals could certainly keep characters, both religious and otherwise, on their toes. Also, the idea that gods become more like mortals as they lose worshippers and the rise of new gods related to modern (or fantastically modern) thought and necessities might make for a great campaign. Both of these concepts could also easily insert into an existing D&D game with little work and bring the powers of deities to a new and dynamic forefront.

GODLY GEAR

As in any ancient myth, the gods of *American Gods* and their followers make use of a wide variety of weapons and signature items. This article presents a number of tools and artifacts, each inspired by similar relics appearing in *American Gods*, as magic items ready for use in your D&D game.

Ashen Branch

A twig from the tree that supports the world, this thin, 2-foot-long, twisted branch still bears leafy sprouts, as if newly cut from its parent tree. This item seems like a simple branch until thrown. As it flies through the air, it straightens and takes on an almost metallic sheen, transforming into a *+3 adamantine spear.* After an attack, whether or not it struck its intended target, the javelin transforms back into a simple branch.

Moderate transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *plant growth;* Price: 21,301 gp; Weight 3 lb.

Chernobog's Sledge

The favored weapon of the dualistic god of creation and destruction, this simple warhammer appears to be merely a rusted, rectangular block of pig iron attached to a worn, splintering wooden haft. It seems perfect for slaughtering cattle. Although it looks like little more than a rusted tool, *Chernobog's sledge* is in fact a *+3 mighty cleaving wounding warhammer.* However, it only operates as such at night. During the day, it functions merely as a masterwork warhammer.

Strong transmutation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *deeper darkness;* Price: 72,312 gp; Weight 10 lb.

Eagle Stones

Legends say these small blue pebbles come from the skulls of thunderbirds, creatures supposedly hunted to extinction by ancient savages. Now found only upon the highest mountain aeries or ancient boneyards, these magic items are as potent as they are temporary. If placed in the mouth of any dead creature, regardless of race, size, or Hit Dice, the *eagle stone* casts *true resurrection* on the corpse. Unfortunately, the magic of an *eagle stone* only works once, and after returning a creature to life, it becomes nothing more than a shiny blue stone.

Strong conjuration; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, *true resurrection;* Price: 7,650 gp; Weight —.

Mad Leprechaun's Coin

Said to come from an ancient fey's treasure hoard, this featureless gold coin dangles from a simple silver chain and has the size and weight of two normal coins stacked. Legends say that any creature wearing this coin never dies—a partial truth as much a curse as a blessing. If the wearer of the *mad leprechaun's coin* dies, the coin animates him 24 hours later as a zombie. If the wearer is destroyed as a zombie, or if the *mad leprechaun's coin* is removed, the wearer does not reanimate, but can be returned to life through normal magical means. The *mad leprechaun's coin* only affects creatures that die while wearing the necklace and cannot be placed on a corpse to reanimate it.

Faint necromancy; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate dead;* Price 30,000 gp; Weight —.

Wednesday's Left Eye

A fracture runs through this chipped gray glass eye. Considered a lucky charm to those with good intentions, a magnificent blunder involving this item made it the bane of swindlers and con artists of all sorts. A character bearing *Wednesday's left eye* gains a +4 bonus on all Diplomacy, Heal, and Survival checks, but suffers a –4 penalty on all Bluff, Intimidate, and Slight of Hand checks.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *eagle's splendor;* Price 6,000 gp; Weight —.

Wednesday's Pin

This simple silver pin bears the embossed image of a massive ash tree with arching branches and deep roots. Slightly tarnished but nevertheless a tasteful accessory, those who examine the pin closely might see a miniscule hawk, squirrel, and snake hidden among the roots and branches of the tree. Characters who attach this pin to a shirt or cloak gain a +2 bonus on all Bluff checks while wearing it. Once per day, the pin's owner can throw it on the ground to create the effects of a *Quaal's feather token (tree).* The pin remains a tree for 1 hour before transforming back into a pin.

Strong transmutation; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, *major creation;* Price 24,000 gp; Weight —.

Zorya Polunochnaya's Moon

This simple silver coin appears newly minted, but it is otherwise completely unremarkable. Once per day, the bearer can transform the coin into a glowing sphere that emits light equivalent to a torch, exactly like one of the light globes created by a *dancing lights* spell. The coin remains lit for 1 hour, and during that time, its owner can direct it as a *dancing lights* spell (maximum range 130 feet). While in its light globe state, the coin's owner can voluntarily seize it, or another creature can attempt to grab it. *Zorya Polunochnaya's moon* has AC 24 while animated, 20 hit points, and hardness 8.

Faint evocation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *dancing lights;* Price 1,000 gp; Weight —.

ZOGONIA
HEY! LOOK! WHAT IS THAT BLOBBY-LOOKING WHITE THING UP AHEAD?
by Tony Moseley
A SNOW MAN ?!
THIS IS NOT A NATURAL OCCURANCE! READY YOUR WEAPONS !!!
IT HAS CARROT-HORNS, SO IT MUST BE EVIL... UNLESS THE CARROTS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE BUNNY EARS.
WANT ME TO KNOCK IT OVER?
NO, DINDIL. IT MAY BE A GOLEM PROGRAMMED TO ATTACK IF DISTURBED!
WOW!
SNOWMAN, REVEAL YOUR SECRETS!
MAYBE WE SHOULD TORTURE IT WITH FIRE.
THIS IS WHAT WE WILL DO: WE WILL WAIT UNTIL IT MOVES!! OR SPEAKS!!
WAIT?
STEADY, GUYS.
2 hours later
STILL MELTING.
TonyM ©2004
Later...
REMAIN ALERT, GUYS.
RUN!!! IT'S TRYING TO BORE US TO DEATH!!!
end
Tony Moseley www.zogonia.com

orcs, goblins, dragons, and Mickey Mouse

The creature count is on the rise in Southern California. But they're not all cute and fuzzy.

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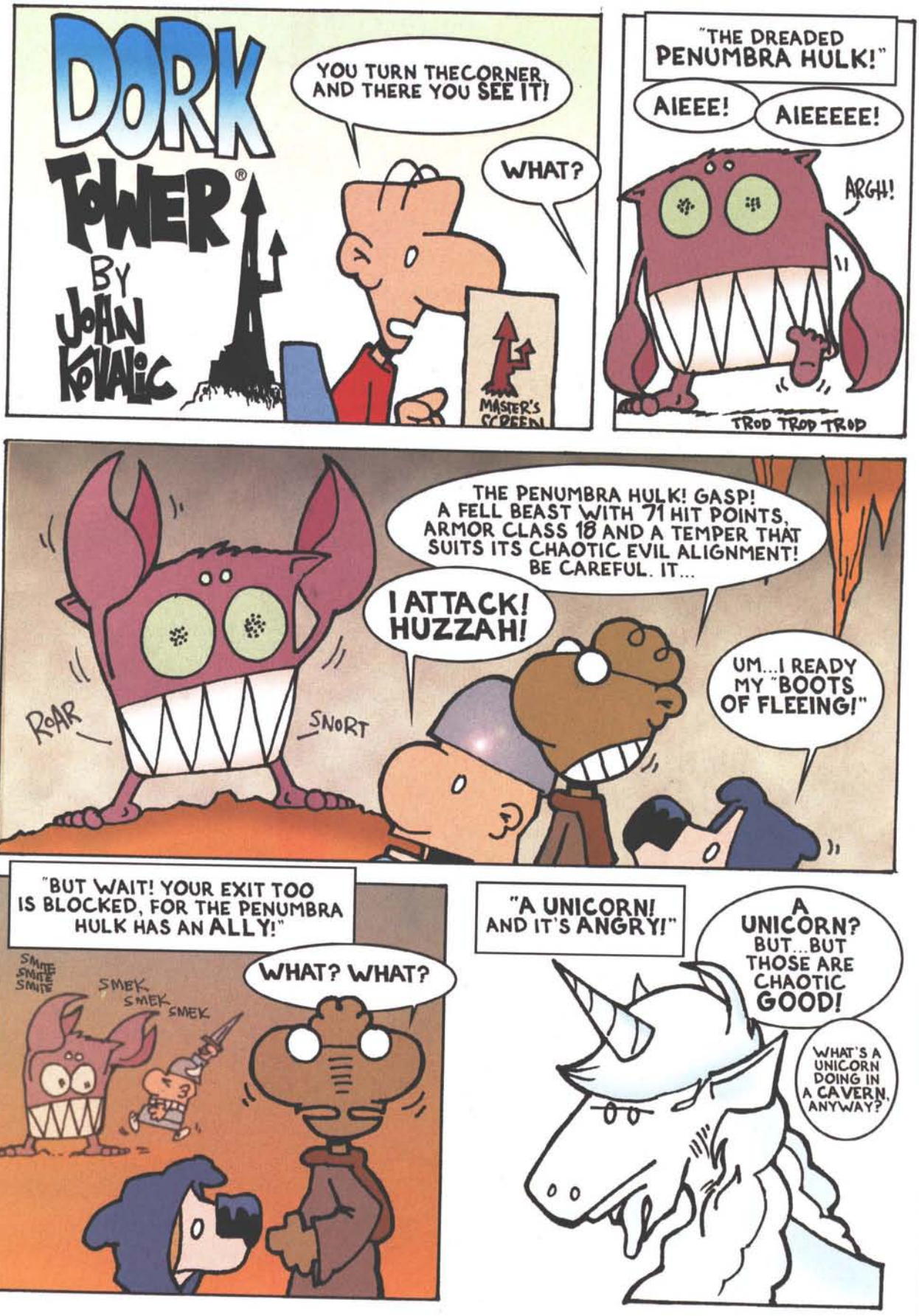
Nodwick

by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

A dragon on the wing is a dream to some folk... A nightmare to others.

I DON'T THINK IT HEARD US.
AND I'VE DISABLED ALL THE WARDS WE'VE SEEN.
AND MY PROTECTION FROM NAUGHTINESS SPELLS ARE AT FULL POWER!
OKAY, PEOPLE. WE'RE GOING IN!
ISN'T THERE SUPPOSED TO BE A DRAGON IN HERE?
I WOULD THINK SO.
IS THERE ANOTHER WAY OUT?
NO, THERE ISN'T.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
OH, I'M QUITE FAMILIAR WITH THIS PLACE. AND YOU KNOW, YOUR RELIANCE ON HENCHMEN TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IS YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS. WITHOUT THEIR COMMON SENSE AND EXPENDABILITY, YOU THREE WOULD HAVE BLUNDERED INTO YOUR GRAVES LONG AGO.
SO, IF I TAKE THAT OUT OF THE EQUATION, YOUR DEFEAT BY, SAY, A DRAGON IS MORE THAN CERTAIN.
WHAT DRAGON? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHY, ME OF COURSE! YOUR HENCHMAN WAS QUITE TASTY. I DEVOURED HIM WEEKS AGO AND TOOK HIS PLACE.
IT WASN'T EASY OR PLEASANT PLAYING HIS PART, I ASSURE YOU...
...BUT I INTEND TO MAKE UP FOR IT NOW!
OOOO-KAY. NO MORE TERIYAKI-STIR FRY BEFORE BEDTIME FOR YOU GUYS...

Poor Cousin Mordecai.
He fell down the stairs,
And was bitten by bears.
He was overcome by the measles,
And devoured by weasels,
He choked on a bone,
And died old and alone.
We should all be so lucky.
The Game of Inauspicious Incidents & Grave Consequences
Gloom
by Keith Baker
ATLAS GAMES
www.atlas-games.com
In Gloom, you control the fate of an eccentric family of misfits. Your goal is sad, but simple: make your characters suffer the greatest tragedies possible before helping them pass on to the well-deserved respite of death. Play cards with horrible mishaps like Pursued by Poodles or Swindled by Salesmen on your own characters, while trying to cheer your opponents' characters with happy occasions. The transparent cards reveal or obscure the effects of cards below; in the end, the totals showing through determine your score … may the most miserable soul win!
2 to 4 Players • Ages 8 and Up
AG1250 • ISBN 1-58978-068-X • $19.95 (US)


DORK TOWER®
BY JOHN KOVALIC
YOU TURN THE CORNER AND THERE YOU SEE IT!
WHAT?
MASTER'S SCREEN
"THE DREADED PENUMBRA HULK!"
AIEEE!
AIEEEEE!
ARGH!
TROD TROD TROD
THE PENUMBRA HULK! GASP! A FELL BEAST WITH 71 HIT POINTS, ARMOR CLASS 18 AND A TEMPER THAT SUITS ITS CHAOTIC EVIL ALIGNMENT! BE CAREFUL. IT...
I ATTACK! HUZZAH!
UM...I READY MY "BOOTS OF FLEEING!"
ROAR
SNORT
"BUT WAIT! YOUR EXIT TOO IS BLOCKED, FOR THE PENUMBRA HULK HAS AN ALLY!"
WHAT? WHAT?
SMITE SMITE SMITE
SMEK SMEK SMEK
"A UNICORN! AND IT'S ANGRY!"
A UNICORN? BUT...BUT THOSE ARE CHAOTIC GOOD!
WHAT'S A UNICORN DOING IN A CAVERN, ANYWAY?

"YOU HAVE NO TIME TO THINK UPON SUCH MATTERS! FOR AT THAT MOMENT, THE KOBOLD ARRIVES!"
THE..UH... KOBOLD. OF... COURSE...
SQUEAK
"...FOLLOWED BY THE REST OF ITS GROUP, THE KUO-TOA, PALADIN, AND GNOME!"
OH NO! OH NO! YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS, DON'T YOU?
THIS UNHOLY BOND BETWEEN CHAOTIC EVIL, LAWFUL EVIL, LAWFUL GOOD, NEUTRAL EVIL AND NEUTRAL GOOD?
SOME UNHOLY FORCE HAS UNITED THESE PASSIONATE FOES IN AN ALLIANCE THAT SHALL MAKE THE WORLD OF MAN SHAKE IN FEAR!
EITHER THAT, OR...
...OUR DUNGEON MASTER WAS TOO CHEAP TO PICK UP MORE THAN ONE SET OF RANDOM COLLECTIBLE MINIATURES BEFORE DESIGNING THIS #@$!€@# ADVENTURE...
OOO! OOO! LOOK OUT! THE LAST MEMBER OF THEIR PARTY, THE FEARSOME EMPTY MINIS BOX MONSTER, IS ON ITS WAY! TROD, TROD, TROD!
MASTER SCREEN
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WWW.DORKTOWER.COM

by James Jacobs
illustrated by Jeff Laubenstein

The Shadow Over D&D

H. P. Lovecraft's Influence on Dungeons & Dragons

With all the elves, magic rings, dwarves, orcs, and hobbits—ahem, halflings—in the game, there's no denying the fact that J. R. R. Tolkein's work influenced Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson as they hammered out the rules for what would someday become Dungeons & Dragons. Yet Tolkein was by no means the only influence on the game. Numerous authors inspired its creation: Robert E. Howard (from Conan to the remorhaz), Fritz Leiber (from thieves' guilds to wererat empires), Michael Moorcock (law vs. chaos and soul-eating swords), Jack Vance (demon lords and preparing spells). These writers earned a reputation for their tales of high fantasy and adventure, but another author belongs on this list (even though the "heroes" in his stories more likely fainted or went mad when faced with fighting monsters): Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

Lovecraft's Life

H. P. Lovecraft was born on August 20, 1890. As a child, he spent his time exploring the nearby countryside and ancient buildings; even at this age, old things held a special fascination for him. He also cultivated an early appreciation for the fantastic, and he loved to hear fairy tales, ghost stories, and the like. Eventually his tastes turned to *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, the *Arabian Nights*, Greek and Roman mythology, and by age eight, to Edgar Allen Poe. Science (particularly astronomy and chemistry) also intrigued him, but he gleaned most of his knowledge from his family's library. Frequent bouts of illness led to an inactive childhood, and he missed school more often than not. His health problems prevented his attending college or joining the military, so he finally turned to the one thing he felt he could do well: writing.

Although he broke into print at age sixteen (with a monthly astronomy article in the local daily paper), he had already written many short stories. Unfortunately, he soon grew dissatisfied with fiction and destroyed almost all of his earlier work. For many years, he focused his energies on verse, essays, and criticism. In 1914, he joined an amateur press association and quickly forged many life-long friendships and contacts with other writers. It wasn't until 1917 that he returned to fiction with two supernaturally themed stories, "The Tomb" and "Dagon." He continued to write weird fiction until his death 20 years later.

Lovecraft's early fiction went through several stages. He generally regarded his earlier stories, like "Herbert West—Reanimator," as "very poor." He became a regular contributor to pulp magazines, selling stories to several different magazines such as *Amazing Stories* and *Weird Tales*. When he wasn't writing his own stories, he reviewed and revised the works of other writers (including a story by Harry Houdini). As the years crept by, his stories grew in length and complexity, making it increasingly difficult for them to find homes in pulp magazines.

In the last few years before his death in 1937, Lovecraft produced only a couple of stories a year. A few years later, Lovecraft's friend August Derleth founded Arkham House, an imprint dedicated to collecting Lovecraft's writing between cloth covers and keeping his work available as the years marched on. Arkham House grew into an important publisher of science fiction, fantasy, and horror, and continues to

LOVECRAFT ON SHARED MYTHOS

"Regarding the dreaded *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred—I must confess that both the evil volume & the accursed author are fictitious creatures of my own—as are the malign entities of Azathoth, Yog-Sothoth, Nyarlathotep, Shub-Niggurath, etc. Tsathoggua & the *Book of Eibon* are inventions of Clark Ashton Smith, while Friedrich von Junzt & his monstrous Unaussprechlichen Kulten originated in the fertile brain of Robert E. Howard. For the fun of building up a convincing cycle of synthetic folklore, all of our gang frequently allude to the pet daemons of the others—thus Smith uses my Yog-Sothoth, while I use his Tsathoggua. Also, I sometimes insert a devil or two of my own in the tales I revise or ghost-write for professional clients. Thus our black pantheon acquires an extensive publicity & pseudo-authoritativeness it would not otherwise get."

—from a letter to William Frederick Anger; August 14, 1934

publish books to this day. Lovecraft's stories have now seen publication in a wide range of editions, languages, and mediums, but always, the stories endure.

Cthulhuism & Yog-Sothothery

Lovecraft's stories belonged to a genre he referred to as the "weird story." Weird stories present tales in which things are not what they seem, stories filled with fantasy and terror inconceivable in the real world. Some of these tales were lurid shockers, like "Herbert West—Reanimator" and "The Lurking Fear." Others were fanciful tales set in an alternate world known as Earth's Dreamlands; these stories, like "The Doom that Came to Sarnath" or *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath*, with their medieval flavor and emphasis on exploration and discovery, present themes closest to Dungeons & Dragons. Yet his most successful and best known stories developed the Cthulhu mythos.

In "The Call of Cthulhu," Lovecraft introduced us to an ancient and monstrous entity known as Great Cthulhu, a vast alien creature that slept in a ruined city deep under the Pacific Ocean. Cults worshiped it, artists went mad when their dreams brushed against its slumbering mind, and in the end, the vast being itself emerged momentarily from its aeons-long sleep to walk under the stars.

In other stories, Lovecraft continued to expand on this mythos, adding other alien entities and unknowable primeval gods to an ever-expanding pantheon. These monstrous beings had names that have since become infamous: Yog-Sothoth, Azathoth, Shub-Niggurath, Nyarlathotep. The stories themselves only very rarely focused on these creatures; usually a story mentioned their names to provide additional weight and menace. Lovecraft also invented numerous ancient texts filled with forbidden lore about these Great Old Ones, but the most enduring of these texts (and arguably Lovecraft's most famous invention) was the *Necronomicon*.

Yet the greatest factor in cementing his creations into the history of fantasy and horror is the fact that he encouraged his friends to write about his inventions. He asked them to include the books and entities in their own stories, and most importantly, to make up new additions to the growing mythos as they saw fit. Many of these writers became acknowledged masters in their own right; Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Fritz Leiber, and Robert Bloch made up only a handful of Lovecraft's circle. Lovecraft followed his own advice and snuck in a Yig here and a Ghathanothoa there in the revision projects he worked on for hopeful writers, further seeding the names into history. He even went as far as to borrow names invented many years before by deceased writers: Hastur, for example, first appeared in the writings of Ambrose Bierce, and Dagon originally came from the religion of the Philistines. Lovecraft never used the term "Cthulhu mythos" to refer to these stories; the closest he got was offhand references in some of his letters to "Cthulhuism & Yog-Sothothery." In a strange sort of way, he and his friends engaged in a practice not dissimilar to the Open Gaming License of the d20 system, sharing their inventions freely to create something larger than the sum of its parts.

Incredibly, this shared universe only picked up steam over the decades after Lovecraft's death, and today his influence is more invasive than one might suspect. Stephen King regularly makes use of Lovecraft's creations in his novels, usually as subtle references but sometimes basing entire stories around the mythos. Video games drip with Lovecraftian references; anyone remember the name of the final boss in the original *Quake*? Answer: Shub-Niggurath. How about *Alone in the Dark*, one of the first computer games to embrace a true 3D environment (and the inspiration for countless of follow-ups, including the smash hit *Resident Evil* games)? Also, a new video game by Headfirst Productions called *Dark Corners of the Earth*, set in Lovecraft's signature town of Innsmouth, releases this year. Many of Lovecraft's stories have also been translated onto the silver screen with varying degrees of success, but his themes and "Yog-Sothothery" appear in movies like *Evil Dead* and *Hellboy*. Even television shows, from *Star Trek* to *Futurama*, periodically get in on the fun.

So in retrospect, it only seems natural that Lovecraft had his hand in the inspiration of Dungeons & Dragons as well. What might be surprising is just how much he influenced the game.

Lovecraft and D&D

Of course, the most obvious Lovecraftian inspirations appear as the numerous times the Great Old Ones and his other monsters emerge with game statistics. Undaunted by the fact that many of his inventions (including a blind idiot god, creatures far larger than planets, and intelligent colors) simply don't translate well into "flesh and blood" statistics like a troll or a dragon might, many authors presented Lovecraftian monsters like shoggoths and their ilk for the various incarnations of the D&D rules through the ages.

The first incarnation of Lovecraft's works in D&D appeared in *Dragon* #12, with Robert J. Kuntz's article, "The Lovecraftian Mythos in Dungeons & Dragons," and it immediately fell victim to the continuity trap: Lovecraft and his friends didn't limit themselves to strong continuity between stories when

they used the mythos. Different societies worshiped the Great Old Ones in different ways, and as a result, a reader could come away with vastly different interpretations of the mythos, depending on which stories he read. That article presented D&D statistics for several of Lovecraft's Great Old Ones and lesser monsters, and it quickly generated a stir. A fan named Gerald Guinn was so taken aback by Rob's interpretation of the mythos that he sent in a letter of complaint to the editor. This letter, printed in issue #14 of *Dragon*, suggested alternitive statistics for the Great Old Ones and monsters in the earlier issue. Of course, both interpretations contained errors, yet at the same time both interpretations were equally valid.

Next came the first printing of *Deities & Demigods* for the first edition Advanced Dungeons & Dragons rules. This book presented no less than seventeen pantheons of historic and fantastic deities and creatures for use in the game, and much to the delight of Lovecraft fans everywhere, the book included a beefy section on the Cthulhu mythos. Unfortunately, legal complications prevented the inclusion of the Cthulhu mythos in the second printing of *Deities & Demigods*, and for many long years, the game lacked direct statistics for the Great Old Ones. Fortunately, another game company, Chaosium Inc., filled the void with their excellent *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game.

Then in 2002, Wizards of the Coast and Chaosium Inc. struck a deal. Wizards would produce a d20 version of Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game. While entirely self-contained, the rules introduced in *Call of Cthulhu* are quite compatible with D&D; the book even includes an appendix filled with notes and suggestions on how to use the book in D&D campaigns. After an exile of nearly two decades, the Great Old Ones returned to Dungeons & Dragons.

Lovecraftian Adventures

Numerous Dungeons & Dragons adventures published by TSR, Wizards of the Coast, and other companies over the years draw on Lovecraftian themes. Gary Gygax made the Dark God Tharizdun the focus of his adventure *The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun*, in which a clan of giants and goblinoids moves into an ancient mountain temple that just might contain the imprisoned body of an eldritch demon god. Many years later, *Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil* took up Tharizdun's torch again, further detailing the dark god of madness and entropy. Although Robert J. Kuntz and Gary Gygax created Tharizdun, he obviously owes his pedigree to Lovecraft.

In 1981, TSR released the second adventure for their Expert Rules for D&D: *Castle Amber*. This adventure featured a family of lunatics that dwelt within the titular edifice. Adventurers who delved too deeply into Castle Amber found themselves transported to a strangely haunted realm known as Averoigne—the same Averoigne invented by one of Lovecraft's greatest friends, Clark Ashton Smith, who made liberal use of Lovecraft's inventions (and several of his own) to craft a fantastic version of medieval France haunted by vampires, necromancers, and tentacled monsters that slithered in the night.

Several years later, in 1984, TSR published *Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure*. Not only did this adventure feature several artifacts inspired by Lovecraft (including the *Silver Key of Portals* and an ancient book of forbidden knowledge called the *Tome of the Black Heart*), but it also contained several tantalizing hints to a mysterious Lost City of the Elders. Many of Lovecraft's stories revolve around the discovery of lost cities, most notably *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath* (in which the hero sets out on a quest to find a lost city), *At the Mountains of Madness* (in which a lost city that holds the key to the history of life on Earth is discovered in Antarctica), and *The Shadow Out of Time* (in which a lost city holds the mind-blasting secret to a man's amnesia). Certainly, something equally eldritch and terrible lurks in the Lost City of the Elders!

Another adventure with a distinctly Lovecraftian feel is Bruce Cordell's *The Gates of Firestorm Peak*. In this adventure, a fiery comet in the sky heralds the opening of a pair of vast doors on Firestorm Peak, giving the PCs a chance to infiltrate a massive dungeon filled with progressively more alien and disturbing monstrosities. Deep inside Firestorm Peak lies a portal to an insidious region beyond sanity and light known only as the Far Realm, and the unknowable but hostile entities of this hideous region prepare to pass through into the world.

One of the more recent d20 adventures to embrace Lovecraft's themes are the various Freeport adventures and supplements published by Green Ronin. In fact, their first publication, *Death in Freeport*, offered not only one of the first d20 products available after the release of third edition D&D, but it also featured a cult of demented lunatics who had more than casual ties to Lovecraft's snake-god Yig, as well as to a sinister ancient deity known only as the Unspeakable One (who might or might not be Hastur).

Other Influences

Beyond the actual game statistics for the monsters and the adventures based on Lovecraftian themes, an impressive

LOVECRAFT ON GAMES

"There is a basic difference between the tense drama of meeting and overcoming an inevitable problem or obstacle in real life, and the secondary or symbolic drama of meeting or overcoming a problem or obstacle which has merely been artificially set up. The chess-player has no breathless sense of uncovering unknown secrets of the cosmos, as the real research scientist has; while the football-player lacks the intense exaltation of knowing that his efforts are necessary to save his country from disaster. Accordingly, I feel quite justified in believing that games and sports ought not to be ranked among the major phenomena of life. However—let it not be thought hat I am denying them any place whatever in the scheme of things. They have, undoubtedly, the poetic value of symbolism. Chess, by bringing into play the same human forces which are used in conquering the unknown and planning life, is a sort of ceremony in celebration of those forces—an exaltation of the forces as intrinsic things in themselves, all apart from the question of object."

—from a letter to Robert E. Howard; October 3, 1932

LOVECRAFT ON FAFHRD AND THE GRAY MOUSER

"[Harry O. Fischer and Fritz Leiber's] myth-cycle, originally started by Fischer, involves my own pantheon of Yog-Sothoth, Cthulhu, etc., and revolves round the adventures of two young characters (Fafhrd the Viking, modeled after Leiber—who is six feet four—and the Gray Mouser, modeled after the diminutive Fischer) in a vague congeries of fabulous and half-fabulous worlds of the remote past. Fischer's parts of this cycle are vivid but unformulated and disjointed, so that at present Leiber—the better craftsman—is the only publicly visible author of the pair."

—from an unfinished letter to James F. Morton; March 1937

number of established D&D conventions draw inspiration from his writing.

Aboleths: These abominable ichthyic monsters would find themselves right at home in one of Lovecraft's stories. Lovecraft loathed seafood, and this hatred often manifested in his work in the form of sea monsters and terrible mysteries hidden in the depths of the ocean. Just as the creatures in many of his stories, the aboleth are an alien, aquatic race that builds vast underwater cities and preys on humanity the same way we prey upon cattle.

The Creator Race: In the FORGOTTEN REALMS, the mysterious creator race first rose to power and dominated the world. The concept of an ancient race, advanced even when the world was young, is best represented in one of Lovecraft's greatest works, *At the Mountains of Madness*. In this short novel, a group of Antarctic explorers discover a primeval city frozen in the ice beyond a range of impossibly tall mountains. While exploring this city, they discover that the inhuman denizens of the city created life on Earth, although it turns out that they created all other creatures to serve as slaves. These Old Ones, like the Creator Race, moved on, but their creations and discoveries remain to this day in their respective worlds.

Evil Tomes: Dangerous books have been a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS staple from the beginning. Magic tomes like the *Book of Vile Darkness*, the *Codex of Infinite Planes*, *Iggwilv's Demonomicon*, and the *Tome of the Black Heart* contain secrets so mind-numbing and soul-wrenching that merely glancing through their pages might ruin your character. Lovecraft made constant use of ancient texts and blasphemous tomes of knowledge, the most famous being the *Necronomicon*. Of course, the immediate effects of reading the *Necronomicon* were nowhere near those of reading a cursed D&D book like the *Vacuous Grimoire*!

The Far Realm: Originally introduced in Bruce Cordell's adventure *The Gates of Firestorm Peak*, the Far Realm is a dimension of madness and horror that lies beyond the rim of the planes. Lovecraft often wrote of other dimensions and realms so alien to humanity that to know them tempted insanity, and more often than not, his monsters and Great Old Ones related closely to these dimensions.

Ghouls & Ghasts: Lovecraft wrote many stories about ghouls, some of which (like "The Outsider" or "Pickman's Model") featured them in this world, but just as many placed them in Earth's Dreamlands, a medieval parallel world that exists beyond dream and in a dimension of its own. In the Dreamlands, degenerate humans who succumbed to the taste of human cadavers devolved into feral monsters called ghouls. Yet the ghouls were in turn menaced by the ghasts, stronger ghoullike creatures who added cannibalism to their list of gastronomical wickedness. Ghasts remain one of the few Lovecraftian monsters to directly become D&D canon.

Mind Flayers: Of all the classic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS monsters, no creature more blatantly owes homage to Lovecraft than the mind flayer. Apart from a difference in size (and a lack of rudimentary wings), the mind flayer is the spitting image of Lovecraft's most famous monster, Great Cthulhu. Yet the influence extends far beyond the mere physical. As with Lovecraft's alien Mi-Go, mind flayers obsess over brains. Whereas the Mi-Go extract human brains and ensconce them in metallic cylinders that allow the brain a terrible continuance of life, mind flayers use them as a source of food and reproduction. Also, just like the ancient Great Race featured in "The Shadow Out of Time", mind flayers build great underground cities and travel through the dimensions by projecting their minds and thoughts outward through the gulfs of reality. Finally, the mere fact that mind flayers blast the minds of lesser creatures into reeling despair cinches the deal; the mind flayer might be the most passionate attempt to capture Lovecraft within the constraints of D&D.

Sahuagin and Kuo-Toa: In "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," a traveler comes to a decaying Massachusetts sea port only to realize almost too late that the malformed citizens of the town interbreed with a race of fishlike humanoids from the deep. These deep ones build vast underwater cities and often seek contact with human settlements for their own nefarious ends. In D&D, the sahuagin and the kuo-toa offer the closest analogs. The connection to Lovecraft's deep ones becomes even stronger with the introduction of malenti, sahuagin offspring identical in appearance to aquatic elves and used to infiltrate elven cities to inflict mayhem.

Serpent Folk: More horrific anthropomorphic animals appear in Lovecraft's writings than just fish-people. He also mentions races of serpent folk in many of his stories, and although he never touches much on these creatures in his writing, they appear quite often in Robert E. Howard's stories, particularly in certain tales of King Kull. In any case, the serpent folk worship Yig, a snake god invented by Lovecraft for one of his revision clients. As with fish-men, D&D has a long tradition of snake-people, as yuan-ti appeared in the 1981 adventure *Dwellers in the Forbidden City* (which coincidently also introduced aboleths).

The Silver Key of Portals: Lovecraft wrote two stories that focused on a magic artifact called the Silver Key; a device that served as a focus of sorts and allowed its owner to travel through various dimensions and unlock hidden portals. In 1984's *Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure* (recently revisited in issue #112 of DUNGEON), Mordenkainen himself owns an artifact called the *Silver Key of Portals* that unlocks any door, and

(in its third-edition incarnation) allows travel through the dimensions as well.

The Underdark: Finally, we come to the Underdark. The concept of a vast underground world is not unique to D&D or to Lovecraft. Yet the Underworld as described in Lovecraft's *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath* bears a striking resemblance to the Underdark. In the Dreamlands, the Underworld holds a vast network of lightless caverns and tunnels below the surface of the world, where the gods banished the gugs, a race of hairy giants. Numerous other races, such as ghouls and ghasts, also populate the Underworld. The banishment of the gugs mirrors in many ways the banishment of the drow to the Underdark, and both also share the concept of monstrous civilizations in the dark below. Finally, there's the simple fact that the majority of the Lovecraftian races (most notably the aboleth and the illithids) dwell in the deepest reaches of the Underdark.

Lovecraft in Your Campaign

So how do you include Lovecraft in your D&D campaign? Fortunately, several products already present the majority of game mechanics you might need. The d20 *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game offers countless tools and rules for using Lovecraftian themes in Dungeons & Dragons. The statistics there need some tweaking to convert over to the revised D&D rules. For madness in D&D, you should check out Unearthed Arcana, which reprints the sanity rules from that game in great detail. Yet, even if you don't own *Call of Cthulhu* (which contain statistics for dozens of Lovecraftian monsters, Great Old Ones, magic items, and spells) or *Unearthed Arcana*, you can still run an effective Lovecraftian-themed campaign simply by reading his stories and using them as inspiration for your adventures. The radioactive menace from "The Colour out of Space" could convert to a half-fiend will-o-wisp ghost that appears on a farm after a freak rift opens and closes between the Material Plane and the Abyss. The villain from "The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward" could be a bitter arcane spellcaster, shunned by the church, who somehow found an arcane (and imperfect) solution to life after death. The titular location from "The Shadow over Innsmouth" could become the base of operations for a band of hybrid pirates and smugglers who might just hide a terrible secret in common with one of your PCs. Perhaps at the very least you might do what Lovecraft did so many times and simply drop a few names. Perhaps not all of your players will catch the true meaning behind the strange reference to something named "Yog-Sothoth" in the local vicar's diary, but those who do will not soon forget the discovery!

Further Reading

All of Lovecraft's stories remain available in bookstores in various editions (both paperback and hardcover). Arkham House Publishers, Inc. still publishes the definitive editions, which, if you can't find them at your local bookstore, can be purchased online at **arkhamhouse.com**. Lovecraft's fiction and revisions (which, in many cases, are almost completely his own writing) are collected in the following four Arkham House volumes:

The Dunwich Horror and Others

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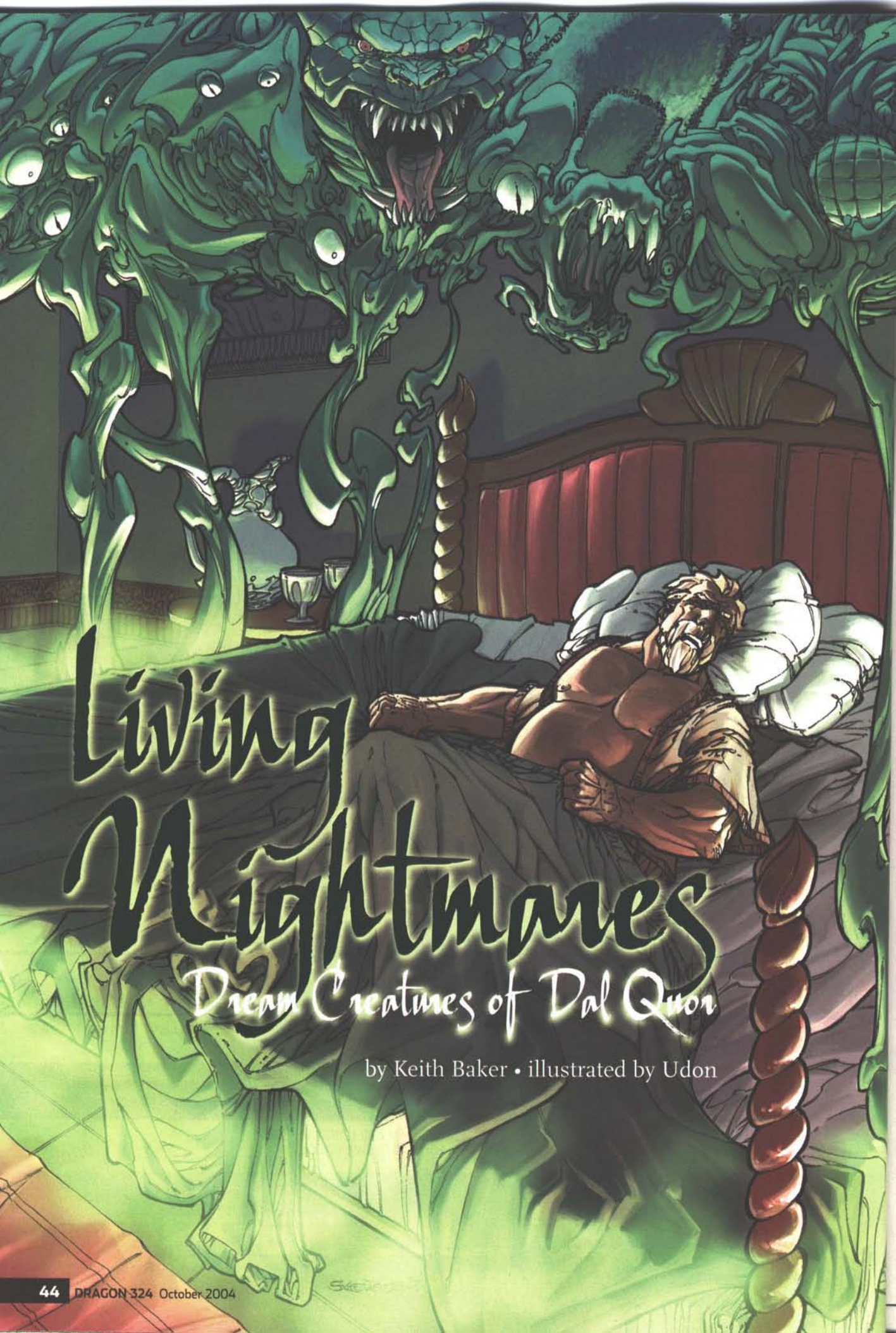

Living Nightmares

Dream Creatures of Dal Quor

by Keith Baker • illustrated by Udon

In the *Eberron Campaign Setting*, mortals touch another plane when they sleep: Dal Quor, the Region of Dreams. The quori, outsiders that gave birth to the kalashtar and the Inspired, claim this realm. Dal Quor is a plane of flowing shadows, constantly shifting to reflect the subconscious desires of mortal minds and the lesser spirits that prowl its fringes.

The *Eberron Campaign Setting* describes one inhabitant of Dal Quor: the tsucora quori, which feeds on the primal fears of its victims. This article presents seven additional denizens of dream, divided into three categories: eidolons, drifters, and the quori.

Adventuring in Dreams

Every night, dreamers psychically project their minds to Dal Quor. The mechanics and possibilities of adventuring in dreams could easily provide enough material for an entire article, but the following rules can aid a DM who wants to take her party into the Region of Dreams.

The simplest way to handle dream encounters is to allow the dreaming characters to possess the same equipment, prepared spells, or power reserve they have in the waking world. However, other possibilities certainly exist. A fighter might find himself battling without his armor. A wizard could have no spells whatsoever, or she could find she has access to arcane knowledge of which she had only dreamed.

Under normal circumstances, a character's dreams cannot harm him, although some natives of Dal Quor have abilities that can affect creatures on other planes. A character usually faces only figments of his imagination in Dal Quor, and most Dal Quor denizens can only force the character to wake up from his nightmare.

Only creatures native to the plane of Dal Quor can physically travel to it. Nonnative creatures can reach Dal Quor only in dreams, and the plane manifests nearly everything in their dreams as a figment. In other words, a sleeping character who dreams of battling monsters fights only figments manifested by the plane, not real monsters. The character's "dreamself" is also a figment; no harm that befalls the "dreamself" actually harms the dreaming character. Normal rules also don't always apply, thus 1st-level wizards might be able to cast *disintegrate* spells on Dal Quor, while goblins could have a thousand hit points.

Real creatures do exist on Dal Quor, however. A dreaming character confronted by such a creature can attack it using any of her true abilities and weapons. Thus, a 1st-level wizard confronted by a real quori on Dal Quor cannot harm the creature with imaginary "figment spells" beyond her natural ability, such as *disintegrate*. However, a spellcaster can cast any spell she normally has to deal real damage to the real creature. The spellcaster then loses the spell from memory (or she uses her spell slot) as normal for her spellcasting class until she wakes up. Similarly, a 1st-level fighter might dream of slaying monsters with an imaginary *+5 longbow*, but when confronted by a real denizen of Dal Quor, the fighter's imaginary weapons deal no damage to the creature. If he wishes to deal real damage, the fighter must use his actual statistics and possessions from the real world, including ammunition (although upon waking he finds that he actually spent none of his ammunition). Similarly, a quori can attack a "dream character" on Dal Quor, dealing real damage with its natural weapons. Even then, a slain "dreamself" results only in the character waking up, uninjured, as damage sustained on Dal Quor doesn't translate to real damage on the Material Plane. (Only quori with the invade dreams ability or a similar ability can truly harm creatures on the Material Plane.) Dreaming characters can kill quori on Dal Quor, which is why they prefer to use their invade dreams ability

Dal Quor without the Expanded Psionics Handbook

The creatures of Dal Quor are denizens of the mind, and many have natural psionic abilities. However, if your campaign doesn't use psionics, you can make the following changes to fit the quori into your campaign.

- Replace power resistance with spell resistance.
- An Autohypnosis check can be made to resist fear or the secondary effect of poison. A dying character can substitute a DC 15 Autohypnosis check for the usual stabilization check.
- Put Knowledge (psionics) skill ranks into Knowledge (arcana) until that skill has the maximum allowable ranks, then put the remainder into Spellcraft skill ranks. Put Psicraft skill ranks into Spellcraft until that skill has the maximum allowable ranks, then put the remainder into Knowledge (arcana) skill ranks. If there are skill ranks left over, place them into Knowledge (the Planes).
- Treat *inertial armor* as *mage armor*.

Hob: Treat the hob's power of *metamorphosis* as *polymorph*, except as noted in the ability description. Its Metamorphic Transfer feats, essential to the creature's abilities, allow it to gain two of the supernatural abilities of a form it turns into, usable three times per day each.

Spellshadow: Replace the spellshadow's Psionic Hole feat with Dodge.

Du'lora Quori: Swap out the du'lora's Ghost Attack, Power Penetration, and Psionic Fist feats with Improved Natural Attack (from the *Monster Manual*), Spell Penetration, and Weapon Focus (slam).

Replace the psi-like abilities of the du'lora with the following spell-like abilities: At will—*mage hand, message;* 3/day—*confusion, mage armor, true seeing;* 1/day—*blasphemy, cure serious wounds.* (When a du'lora uses *confusion*, its victim also adds 10% to the roll made determine the victim's action each round.) Caster level 10th.

Hashalaq Quori: The *euphoric touch* ability should have the effect of *hold monster.* Replace the psi-like abilities of the hashalaq with the following spell-like abilities: At will—*charm monster, detect thoughts, mage hand, message;* 3/day—*cure moderate wounds, discern lies, mage armor, touch of idiocy;* 1/day—*dream, polymorph, scorching ray, vampiric touch.* Caster level 8th.

Kalaraq Quori: Replace the kalaraq's Empower Psi-Like Ability, Power Penetration, and Quicken Psi-Like Ability feats with Empower Spell-Like Ability (from the *Monster Manual*), Spell Penetration, and Quicken Spell-Like Ability (from the *Monster Manual*).

Focused mind seed transforms the personality of the victim into a mirror of the kalaraq. The process takes one week and requires a *miracle* or *wish* to stop it. Replace the psi-like abilities of the kalaraq with the following spell-like abilities: At will—*charm monster, enervation, greater dispel magic, mage armor, invisibility, mage hand, mass hold person, message, touch of idiocy;* 3/day—*finger of death, horrid wilting, insanity;* 1/day—*mind blank.* Caster level 18th.

Dream Creatures without Eberron

Not running an EBERRON campaign or planning on using a Region of Dreams in your game? You can still make use of these great new monsters.

The hob and spellshadow are easy to adapt. Both can exist in your game world without much modification. If you feel you need to, you might change their creature types to something other than outsider. Monstrous humanoid makes a good choice for the hob, and a spellshadow makes an interesting aberration. Either could also be a great undead creature.

The quori might more easily exist in a non-EBERRON game without their dreamlords theme. They could be new types of devils, or with an alignment change, new types of demons. If you want to ground them in your world, the du'lora and hashalaq make cool aberrations, and the kalaraq could be a frightening undead.

and not attack dream characters in the Region of Dreams.

Whenever a dreaming character encounters a creature on Dal Quor, he has a chance to figure out whether it is merely a figment of his imagination or a truly dangerous native denizen of the plane. By interacting with the creature (such as speaking with it or fighting it), the character can make a DC 15 Will save as if disbelieving an illusion. If the character succeeds at the Will save, he knows the true nature of the creature. The DM should adjust the DC according to how closely the creature resembles reality (for example, a seemingly unkillable goblin should lower the DC).

Experience in Dreams

Usually, it is inappropriate to provide characters with XP rewards for challenges they face in their dreams. People dream every night, after all! However, if the party spends an extended amount of time dealing with dream encounters, the DM might want to give the characters a small story reward.

If an adventure cannot conclude without spending some time on Dal Quor, dream plane encounters should provide a set percentage of the experience reward such encounters would otherwise grant. As long as an encounter includes real creatures on the plane (such as quori) instead of merely figments, the PCs should receive some sort of reward. Eidolons and other figments should never provide XP, except as noted above. Other creatures should provide roughly half their usual experience if the encounter takes place solely on Dal Quor.

Eidolons

The quori claim the heart of Dal Quor as their realm, and dreamers rarely reach that center. Instead, dreamers prowl the fringes of the plane, shaping the mutable environment with their subconscious desires.

Characters most often encounter eidolons in the fringe realms of Dal Quor. Much like an illusion, an eidolon is an imaginary creature conjured to play a role in the dream. While an eidolon might appear to act in an intelligent manner, an eidolon possesses no sentience. It simply fulfills a role in the dream, reacting in the required way to meet the needs of the story. Although mindless, eidolons react as if they possessed intelligence, and thus mind-affecting effects affect them normally.

An eidolon can appear as any creature and typically possesses that creature's standard statistics. However, two exceptions exist: nightmare eidolons and idyllic eidolons. Nightmare eidolons have far greater power than the creature they appear as, whereas idyllic eidolons are remarkably easy to defeat. A nightmare eidolon uses statistics from a creature more powerful than the apparent creature (as measured by the creatures' CRs), while an idyllic eidolon uses the creature statistics of a much weaker creature. If you intend to have the PCs dream without the players knowing, you should use statistics for creatures with roughly similar abilities. If the PCs face dream monsters and their players already know it (or you don't care if they figure it out), use whatever statistics you wish.

Eidolons of Dal Quor are different from the rogue eidolons introduced in *Monster Manual II*.

Drifters

In between the purely imaginary eidolons and Dal Quor's true children (the quori) lurk the drifters—bizarre creatures emerging from the collective minds of EBERRON's inhabitants to prey on dreaming souls. Drifters possess sentient intelligence and can exist outside of a dreamer's imagination, but they have no common characteristics with one another. Drifters do not reproduce naturally; they emerge fully formed within the fringes of Dal Quor. The following two drifters represent merely the tip of the iceberg.

Hob

Small Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar)
Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (60 hp)
Initiative: +9
Speed: 40 ft (8 squares)
Armor Class: 20 (+5 Dex, +1 size, +4 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+5
Attack: Claw +10 melee (1d3+1)
Full Attack: Two claws +10 melee (1d3+1) and bite +5 melee (1d4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Darkest fears, paralyzing fear
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/magic, immunity to mind-affecting effects, immunity to poison, *metamorphosis*, power resistance 10, see in darkness, telepathy, tongues
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +8
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 18
Skills: Bluff +15, Disguise +25* (+27 acting), Hide +20, Intimidate +17, Listen +13, Sense Motive +13, Spot +13, Tumble +16
Feats: Improved Initiative, Metamorphic Transfer (2)
Environment: Dal Quor
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 8
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral
Advancement: 9–16 HD (Small), 17–24 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: —

A hunched humanoid lurks in the shadows. It stands about 3 feet tall, and a patchwork of black scales and mangy fur covers its skin. Its bestial head is almost as large as its torso, with 3-foot-long arms tipped with vicious claws. It snarls, revealing a mouth full of rotting fangs.

The predatory hob feeds on the fears of mortal minds. Solitary by nature, hobs roam the fringes of Dal Quor searching for prey. The inscrutable mind of the hob makes it immune to mind-affecting spells and powers, and as a result, hobs sometimes pose threats to quori; hunting parties of tsucora and du'lora quori occasionally roam the border realms, exterminating any hobs they find. Some sages believe that hobs occasionally find a way to reach EBERRON, and encounters with hobs might account for more than a few folk tales.

A small humanoid creature in its natural form, a hob has a hunched posture, long arms, and a vaguely feline head almost as large as its torso. It typically runs on all fours.

Hobs can communicate telepathically with any creature with a language within 100 feet.

Combat

A hob typically hides in the dreamscape of Dal Quor, searching the minds of dreamers for an appropriately terrifying nightmare scenario. Once it finds a suitable choice, it uses its *metamorphosis* ability to take the form of a creature appropriate to the setting of the nightmare, targeting the source of the nightmare with paralyzing fear.

A hob fights to satiate its appetite for mortal terror. The death of a single creature sates its needs, and it attempts to flee soon thereafter.

Darkest Fears (Su): A hob knows the deepest fears of all creatures within 100 feet and uses this information when choosing what forms to assume. This requires no concentration or effort on the part of the hob; it is a continuous, intuitive sense. This also allows the hob to detect the presence of any thinking creature within 100 feet.

This power provides the hob with enough information to carry out a convincing impersonation. If a character fears an evil fighter, the hob knows how the character expects the fighter to behave. This provides the hob with a +5 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Intimidate checks when it plays to a specific character's fears.

Paralyzing Fear (Su): If the hob takes the shape of what creature a single enemy fears most, the hob can paralyze its victim with unreasoning terror. The DM and the character's player can work together to determine what creature a character fears most. Faced with this apparition, the victim must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or be dazed and unable to take any actions for as long as the hob retains that shape or until the character makes a successful saving throw. The victim may attempt a new Will save each round until he succeeds or until the hob changes into a different shape, at which time he breaks free of the daze effect and is immune to that hob's paralyzing fear ability for the next 24 hours. In addition, if the hob makes a successful attack against a dazed victim, that victim must immediately attempt an additional DC 18 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds.

This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The saving throw DCs are Charisma-based.

***Metamorphosis* (Sp):** A hob can change its shape at will as a free action. This works just like the *metamorphosis* power, except that the hob's Metamorphic Transfer feats allow it to assume up to two of the extraordinary or supernatural abilities of its new form, in addition to keeping all of its own innate abilities. A hob can use an adopted power only 3 times/day. The hob can maintain the new form indefinitely, but it resumes its natural form if it killed or knocked unconscious.

Skills: The hob receives a +10 bonus on Disguise checks when using its *metamorphosis* ability.

Spellshadow

Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Incorporeal)
Hit Dice: 6d8+6 (33 hp)
Initiative: +8
Speed: Fly 40 ft (perfect) (8 squares)
Armor Class: 16 (+4 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 16, flat-footed 12
Base Attack/Grapple: +6/—
Attack: Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d6 plus spell theft)
Full Attack: Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d6 plus spell theft)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Spell theft
Special Qualities: Arcane empowerment, incorporeal traits, mage sense, power resistance 17, see in darkness, spell resistance 17, superior hide in plain sight
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +7
Abilities: Str —, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15
Skills: Hide +23, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +13, Search +7, Spellcraft +9, Spot +13
Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Psionic Hole
Environment: Dal Quor
Organization: Solitary or gang (2-5)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral
Advancement: 7-16 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: —

A vaguely human-shaped apparition distorts the air. On closer examination, tiny letters and symbols inscribed on the air in faintly glowing energy define the lines of its body.

The spellshadow feeds on the knowledge of wizards and other arcane spellcasters. Some sages assert that spellshadows manifest from the thirst for arcane knowledge—that wizards' desires for mystical power take form in Dal Quor and feed on their creators.

Unless a character actively tries to keep an eye on it, the mere ripple of air that marks a spellshadow is difficult to spot. It has the vague outline of a humanoid form, composed of mystic symbols and runes. When it uses its spell theft ability, the words that comprise its body briefly flare with mystical energy; otherwise, the spellshadow is virtually impossible to see. A spellshadow understands Common and Draconic, but it never speaks. Its only sounds come from the whisperings of the distorted fragments of spells it has stolen in the past.

Combat

Hunger drives a spellshadow. If a group has no arcane spellcasters, the spellshadow avoids contact entirely. Otherwise, it uses stealth and its incorporeal nature to ambush spellcasters, appearing on top of them and draining magic as quickly as possible. While not terribly intelligent in most situations, a spellshadow possesses a keen instinctive sense of the tactical uses of magic and uses its stolen spells to deadly effect. If it drains all the spells that it can from the party, it attempts to flee.

Spell Theft (Su): The touch of a spellshadow drains away arcane energy and knowledge, stealing prepared spells. Whenever a spellshadow makes a successful melee attack, it drains 1d6 arcane spell levels from the victim. The spellshadow steals one random prepared spell or spell slot of the highest level it can. It then steals the next highest-level spell it can, up to the spell level amount it rolled. For example, a spellshadow that strikes a 5th-level wizard and rolls a 5 for its spell theft first steals a random 3rd-level spell (if the wizard still has one prepared) and a random 2nd-level spell. Against a 5th-level sorcerer, the same roll would result in the spellshadow draining two 2nd-level spell slots and a 1st-level spell slot.

For every 2 Hit Dice it possesses above 6, a spellshadow gains a +1 bonus to its spell theft damage roll; thus a 10 HD spell shadow rolls 1d6+2 and has the potential to steal 8th-level spells. The spellshadow can store a maximum number of spell levels equal to four times its Hit Dice.

This is one of the rare cases where dream damage affects the real world: when a spellshadow drains a spell, the victim cannot make use of that spell or spell slot for 24 hours.

A spellshadow can cast any spell it steals as a 6th-level caster. If the spellshadow steals a spell slot from a spellcaster that does not prepare spells, it can use that spell slot to cast a spell the spellcaster knows that is appropriate for the level of the spell slot.

Arcane Empowerment (Ex): A spellshadow feeds on arcane energy. Whenever it uses its spell theft ability, it heals a number of hit points equal to the number of spell levels drained. In addition, any time an arcane spell affects the spellshadow, it automatically heals a number of hit points equal to the spell's level. This healing occurs before any effects of the spell are resolved. A spell that fails to get by the spellshadow's spell resistance doesn't heal the spellshadow.

Mage Sense (Su): A spellshadow can sense any form of magic within 200 feet, as *greater arcane sight*, but without actually needing to see the target. In addition, the spellshadow can sense the presence of prepared arcane spells not yet cast and unused arcane spell slots, which serve as the food of the spellshadow. This ability allows the spellshadow to ignore magical invisibility and to automatically disbelieve illusions without the need for a saving throw.

Superior Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): A spellshadow can hide while observed and even when it does not have cover or concealment.

Skills: A spellshadow receives a +10 racial bonus on Hide checks.

The Quori

Intelligent and immortal, quori inhabit the central regions of Dal Quor. Cruel but sophisticated, most quori prefer psychological torment to physical conflict. Quori patience knows no end, and they can wait decades to take vengeance on a foe or bring a plan to fruition. While often deadly opponents, most quori want to control every aspect of a battle; if caught by surprise, a quori might flee from an inferior foe, returning when it has the upper hand.

Quori Subtype: Quori is a subtype of the outsider type. It refers to a native of the plane of Dal Quor.

Traits: A quori possesses the following traits (unless otherwise noted in a creature's entry).

—Energy Resistance (Ex): A quori has resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10.

—Greater Teleport (Su): On the plane of Dal Quor, a quori can use *greater teleport* at will, as the spell cast by a 14th-level caster, except that the quori can only transport itself and up to 50 pounds of objects. This ability does not function on other planes.

—Immunities (Ex): Quori are immune to charm, fear, and sleep effects.

—Power Resistance (Ex): A quori gains power resistance equal to 11 + its Hit Dice.

—See in Darkness (Su): A quori can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even darkness created by a *deeper darkness* spell.

—Telepathy (Su): A quori can communicate telepathically with any other creature that has a language within 100 feet.

Quori Special Abilities: Quori that meet certain prerequisites gain the following additional special abilities.

—*Invade Dreams (Sp):* Once per day, a quori with at least 9 Hit Dice residing on the plane of Dal Quor can cast *dream* or *nightmare* on a specified creature on another plane. When appearing in a *dream*, a quori can assume an alternate form, as if using *alter self*. The caster level for this ability equals the quori's Hit Dice. The save DC for the *nightmare* version of this ability is Charisma-based.

—*Possession (Su):* A quori with at least 4 Hit Dice and a Charisma of 13 can shuck its physical form on Dal Quor and take on an ethereal spirit form. Its spirit can then possess a suitable and willing human host (referred to hereafter as a "human vessel"). While in ethereal form, the quori's corporeal body lies senseless on Dal Quor in a state of suspended animation. Direct damage or exposure to an extreme environment harms it normally. The quori can roam ethereally as long as it wants, but the ethereal quori dies if its body is destroyed. It instantly returns to its body if *dispel magic* (or a similar effect) is successfully cast on the quori's body.

An ethereal quori spirit can attempt to possess a human vessel as a standard action. First, it must be adjacent to the desired human vessel. Second, the human vessel must have the same alignment as the quori and have a Charisma score equal to or greater than the quori's Charisma score. Finally, the human vessel must be willing to accept the quori spirit and cannot be warded by a *protection from evil* spell or similar effect.

A possessing quori spirit has immediate access to all of the human vessel's thoughts and memories, and takes full control of the body, the union making what people of EBERRON refer to as "Inspired."

Physical harm to the human vessel does not harm the quori. Killing the human vessel forces the quori's spirit back onto the Ethereal Plane, where it can attempt a new possession. Not even ethereal creatures can harm a possessing quori.

A quori spirit possessing a human vessel grants the receptacle a +4 profane bonus to Charisma. The human vessel loses this profane bonus if the quori spirit is banished or otherwise expelled (by a *dismissal* spell, for example).

If a human vessel's Charisma score ever drops below 13, the possessing quori spirit is no longer able to inhabit the human vessel and is immediately expelled and thrust into an adjacent square.

A quori spirit retains its psi-like abilities and spell-like abilities while possessing a human vessel. However, it cannot use any of its extraordinary or supernatural abilities. The quori spirit combines its skill ranks with those of its human vessel and either retains its mental ability scores or adopts the mental ability scores of the human vessel, whichever are higher.

Du lora Quori (Dark Fury)

Large Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful, Psionic, Quori)
Hit Dice: 10d8+50 (95 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: Fly 70 ft. (perfect) (14 squares)
Armor Class: 18 (+1 Dex, –1 size, +8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+21
Attack: Slam +16 melee (1d6+7)
Full Attack: 3 slams +16 melee (1d6+7)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Aura of fury, burning rage, constrict (1d6+10), improved grab, invade dreams, possession, psi-like abilities
Special Qualities: All-around sight, damage reduction 10/good, greater teleport, immunities, outsider traits, power resistance 21, resistance to acid 10, cold 10,

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and fire 10, see in darkness, telepathy
Saves: Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +11
Abilities: Str 24, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 11
Skills: Autohypnosis +18, Bluff +15, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +19*, Knowledge (psionics) +19, Knowledge (the planes) +15, Listen +16, Move Silently +15, Psicraft +17, Search +21*, Sense Motive +20, Spot +20*, Survival +16 (+18 on other planes)
Feats: Ghost Attack, Power Penetration, Psionic Fist, Track
Environment: Dal Quor
Organization: Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating: 8
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually lawful evil
Advancement: 11-20 HD (Large); 21-30 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

This creature is a whirlwind of eyes, wings, and shadow. Dozens of eyes study you as the creature spins about in midair: human eyes, insect eyes, and a luminescent dragon's eye larger than your head. Its wings are an equally unlikely assortment, and it is difficult to see how they can possibly support its weight. A layer of smoky shadows wreathes the entire mass. Three dark tendrils reach out for you, and you feel a wave of hatred slam against your mind.

A du'lora quori is a spirit of rage, capable of driving mortals mad with its very presence. As the guardian spirits of the quori, the myriad eyes of du'lora sentinels watch the vaults of the Dreaming Dark. In times of battle du'loras fight in the vanguard, watching dispassionately as their enemies turn on one another to satisfy their bloodlust. While a du'lora feeds on the rage of others, the fiends themselves are cold and calculating. The typical du'lora enjoys tearing apart its opponents and burning their souls with flames of pure anger, but it remains a clever tactician and uses its aura of madness to sow chaos and confusion among its enemies.

Where the tsucoras constantly fight for position within the ranks of Dal Quor, du'loras serve the Dreaming Dark contentedly. Battle defines the existence of a du'lora, and these fiends spend their lives eagerly awaiting the next opportunity to match wits with a cunning foe. Du'loras often help the hashalaqs maintain order in Dal Quor, providing physical power to deal with traitors or troublemakers identified by hashalaq inquisitors.

A maelstrom of eyes and wings suspended in a whirlwind of shadow, a du'lora appears insubstantial, but the shadowstuff that forms it is actually solid. A du'lora fights by grappling its enemies with smoky tentacles formed from this dark matter.

Du'loras speak Common, Infernal, Quori, and Riedran.

Combat

Cunning tacticians, typical du'loras use fury as a weapon. A common tactic among du'loras puts them close to spellcasters as soon as possible, where their burning rage ability strips the spellcasters of their ability to use magic or sophisticated tactics. Once a spellcaster has succumbed to burning rage, the du'lora turns its attention to others in the group. *Id insinuation* works particularly well for causing dissension in the ranks, forcing the enemies of the du'lora to fight one another.

A du'lora's natural weapons are considered evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Aura of Fury (Su): The mere presence of the du'lora drives creatures mad with rage. Any non-quori creature within 30 feet of a du'lora must make a successful DC 15 Will save or suffer the effects of the *rage* spell and attack another creature of the du'lora's choosing within range. The affected creature does all it can to kill the target of its rage. As a move action, the du'lora can change the target of an affected creature's rage. This effect lasts for as long as the victim remains within 30 feet of the du'lora. A character who successfully saves against the effect must make a new Will save at the beginning of every round he remains within 30 feet of the quori. A barbarian or other creature that can enter a similar rage suffers a –2 penalty to resist this effect. A character can make an Autohypnosis check in place of his Will save. This is a mind-

affecting compulsion effect, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

Burning Rage (Su): Once a du'lora has established a hold, it can attempt to call on the grappled victim's inner rage and anger to trigger spontaneous combustion. After the du'lora inflicts constriction damage, its victim must make a DC 15 Will save. If the victim fails, it suffers 1d6 points of fire damage for every point by which it failed the Will save. A barbarian or other creature that can enter a similar rage suffers a –2 penalty to resist this effect. A character can make an Autohypnosis check in place of the Will save. This is a mind-affecting effect, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

If it slays a victim with this attack, the du'lora immediately heals 3d6 points of damage as it draws energy from the fury of its dying victim.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a du'lora deals 1d6+10 points of damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the du'lora must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it succeeds on a grapple check, it can constrict.

Psi-Like Abilities: At will—*far hand, mindlink;* 3/day—*id insinuation, inertial armor, psionic scent, trace teleport;* 1/day—*body adjustment, recall agony.* Manifester level 10th. The save DCs are Charisma-based. When a du'lora uses *id insinuation,* its victim adds 10% to the roll made determine the victim's action each round.

All-Around Vision (Ex): The many eyes of a du'lora provide it with a +4 bonus on Spot and Search checks. A du'lora cannot be flanked.

Skills: A du'lora receives a +2 racial bonus on Intimidate checks. It retains this bonus while inhabiting a human or Inspired vessel.

Du lora Inspired

There are 90 Inspired with du'lora spirits on EBERRON. Most of these serve as wardens and commanders among the Thousand Eyes in Riedra. However, the Dreaming Dark occasionally sends du'loras to Khorvaire to provide raw power to its operations. A typical du'lora quori has 12 ranks of Autohypnosis, Bluff, Concentration, Intimidate, Knowledge (psionics), Listen, Move Silently, Psicraft, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival; and 10 ranks of Knowledge (the planes).

Hashalaq Quori (Dreamstealer)

Medium Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful, Psionic, Quori)
Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (60 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: 40 ft (8 squares), fly 40 ft. (perfect)
Armor Class: 17 (+3 Dex, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+10
Attack: Touch +10 melee (1d4+1 Wisdom damage plus *brain lock*)
Full Attack: Touch +10 melee (1d4+1 Wisdom damage plus *brain lock*)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Euphoric touch, intimate knowledge, possession, psi-like abilities
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/good, greater teleport, immunities, outsider traits, power resistance 19, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, see in darkness, telepathy, tongues
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +10
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 13
Skills: Autohypnosis +17, Bluff +6, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +12, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +1, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +16, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +16, Knowledge (psionics) +18, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +10, Psicraft +16, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +13, Spot +10
Feats: Inquisitor, Negotiator, Persuasive
Environment: Dal Quor
Organization: Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating: 6
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually lawful evil
Advancement: 9–16 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: —

You see a man wearing an iridescent, pale blue robe. A deep hood hides his features, and a dim blue light shines out from under the hood. He seems to hover a few inches off of the ground. As you look more closely, you realize that translucent,

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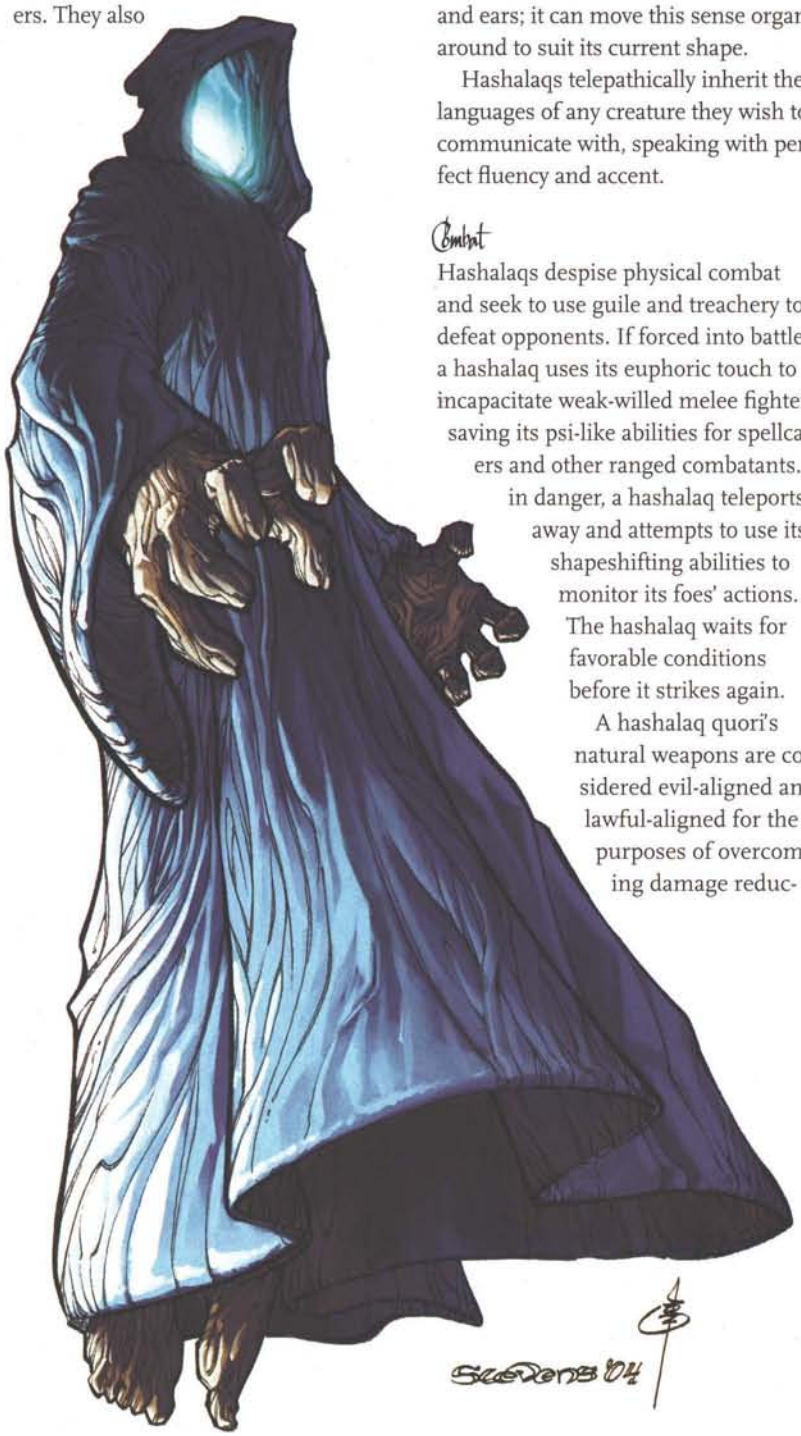
fleshy tendrils twined together form the entire figure—robe and all.

Hashalaqs serve as the loremasters of Dal Quor. Even those hashalaq without Inspired vessels devote a great deal of time studying EBERRON and its surrounding planes. Unlike most quori castes, they understand the ways of magic as well as psionic power. In Dal Quor, hashalaqs typically work as advisors to the higher powers. They also serve as inquisitors, policing the quori and ensuring that the rivalries of the tsucoras never threaten the greater plans of the Dreaming Dark.

In its natural form, a hashalaq quori is composed of hundreds of translucent tendrils, similar to the tentacles of a jellyfish. It can compress its tendrils to form a wide range of shapes, from a humanoid figure to a giant floating hand. A point of blue light suspended within the tendrils serves as its eyes and ears; it can move this sense organ around to suit its current shape.

Hashalaqs telepathically inherit the languages of any creature they wish to communicate with, speaking with perfect fluency and accent.



Combat

Hashalaqs despise physical combat and seek to use guile and treachery to defeat opponents. If forced into battle, a hashalaq uses its euphoric touch to incapacitate weak-willed melee fighters, saving its psi-like abilities for spellcasters and other ranged combatants. If in danger, a hashalaq teleports away and attempts to use its shapeshifting abilities to monitor its foes' actions. The hashalaq waits for favorable conditions before it strikes again.

A hashalaq quori's natural weapons are considered evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction, regardless of the quori's current form.

Euphoric Touch (Su): The touch of a hashalaq floods its victim with sensations of joy and pleasure—feelings so intense they can destroy the victim's mind. Whenever a hashalaq makes a successful melee touch attack, it deals 1d4+1 points of Wisdom damage instead of normal hit point damage. In addition, the victim must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or suffer the effects of *brain lock* for 1d4+1 rounds. If the victim's Wisdom drops to 0, the victim suffers a catastrophic cerebral overload and dies. This is a mind-affecting effect, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

When it slays a victim with this attack, the hashalaq immediately heals 2d6 points of damage. A character killed by a hashalaq in his dream suffers 1d4+1 points of Wisdom damage when he awakens, as well as the effects of a *nightmare* spell.

Intimate Knowledge (Su): A hashalaq quori has an intuitive awareness of the emotions and thoughts of the creatures in its vicinity. This continuous ability functions as the *empathy* and *detect hostile intent* powers, but it affects a 60-foot radius centered on the quori.

As a free action, the hashalaq can focus this power on a single individual. The target may make a DC 15 Will save to resist this effect. If the target fails its save, the hashalaq gains a +2 insight bonus to AC against attacks made by the target and a +2 insight bonus on

Brain Lock

The brain lock power appears in the *Expanded Psionic Handbook*. It has the following description.

The subject's higher mind is locked away. He stands dazed, unable to take any psionic actions (including manifesting powers or using psionic feats that require a decision to be used) nor any mental actions at all. A *brain locked* subject is not stunned, so attackers get no special advantage against him.

A *brain locked* flyer must descend to the closest safest level area below it. An air-breathing swimmer must make for the surface.

attack and damage rolls made against the target. The hashalaq does not have to concentrate to maintain this effect, but it loses its broader awareness when concentrating on a single individual. The intimate knowledge ability of the hashalaq also provides it with a +2 insight bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks.

This is a mind-affecting ability. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Psi-Like Abilities: At will—*far hand;* 3/day—*body adjustment, inertial armor, mind probe;* 1/day—*dream, hostile empathic transfer, metamorphosis.* Manifester level 8th. *Dream* is as the spell of the same name.

Skills: A hashalaq quori receives a +10 bonus on Disguise checks when it uses *metamorphosis.*

Hashalaq Inspired

At present, EBERRON has thirty-three Inspired with hashalaq spirits. A typical hashalaq quori has 11 ranks of Autohypnosis, Concentration, Disguise, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (psionics), Knowledge (the planes), Psicraft, and Sense Motive; 6 ranks of Diplomacy, Gather Information, Listen, Spellcraft, and Spot; and 5 ranks of Bluff, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility), and Knowledge (religion).

Kalaraq Quori (Eyebinder)

Medium Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Incorporeal, Lawful, Psionic, Quori)
Hit Dice: 18d8+76 (207 hp)
Initiative: +11
Speed: Fly 60 ft. (perfect) (12 squares)
Armor Class: 20 (+7 Dex, +3 deflection), touch 20, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple: +18/+20
Attack: Incorporeal touch +25 melee (soul binding) or swarm (soul binding)
Full Attack: 2 incorporeal touches +25 melee (soul binding) or swarm (soul binding)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft./0 ft.)
Special Attacks: Invade dreams, night terror, possession, psi-like abilities, soul binding
Special Qualities: All-around vision, damage reduction 15/good, greater teleport, immunities, incorporeal traits, outsider traits, power resistance 29, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, see in darkness, spying eyes, swarm of eyes, telepathy, true seeing
Saves: Fort +18, Ref +18, Will +16
Abilities: Str —, Dex 25, Con 24, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 16
Skills: Autohypnosis +25, Bluff +13, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +19, Disguise +13 (+15 acting), Hide +17, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Knowledge (psionics) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Listen +13, Move Silently +17, Perform (oratory) +13, Psicraft +22, Search +16*, Sense Motive +23, Spot +17*.
Feats: Combat Expertise, Empower Psi-Like Ability (energy wave), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Penetration, Quicken Psi-Like Ability (psionic blast), Quicken Psi-Like Ability (psychic crush)
Environment: Dal Quor
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 15
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually lawful evil
Advancement: 19–36 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: —

A humanoid figure formed of pure shadow floats before you. A nimbus of light surrounds it without illuminating the surrounding area; it only serves to highlight the absolute darkness of the being within. A host of disembodied eyes of all shapes and sizes whirl around the featureless figure. These eyes constantly shift, appearing, disappearing, fading away, and bursting like bubbles.

Kalaraqs are the princes of nightmare. They guide the quori race. While kalaraqs never fight one another overtly, each has its own agenda; as a result, a

kalaraq rarely leaves Dal Quor to inhabit a mortal vessel.

Brilliant, ruthless, and cruel, kalaraqs are masters of manipulation, capable of twisting the thoughts of mortal and spirit alike. A kalaraq possesses the power to consume and trap souls, preserving their knowledge in its essence. In battle, kalaraqs enjoy taunting opponents with the words of loved ones and other friends the spirit has devoured. An individual kalaraq might have the knowledge of ancient kings, great sages, or even dragons trapped within its essence.

A kalaraq is a creature formed of shadow, surrounded by a host of spectral eyes. Like the hashalaqs, kalaraqs possess a mutable form; while they generally take on humanoid shapes, they can adopt any simple shape of Medium size. This has no impact on its ability scores or combat abilities.

Kalaraqs communicate telepathically, and can broadcast thoughts to any or all creatures within 500 feet. Kalaraqs' projected thoughts typically have a calming, hypnotic quality. The telepathic abilities of the spirit allow it to understand any form of communication used by a creature that has a language.

Combat

In its standard shape, a kalaraq can form weapons or claws to make incorporeal touch attacks that makes use of its soul binding ability. These shadowy attacks strike at the soul of the victim, stripping away his life force and his sanity. When facing a group of enemies, a kalaraq either relies on *energy wave* or *psionic blast*. After it stuns its opponents, the kalaraq disperses into a swirling vortex of eyes and shadow, engulfing its enemies and devouring their minds. Against powerful individual opponents—especially other outsiders—the kalaraq relies instead on focused attacks, such as *ego whip* to strip away spellcasting abilities, followed by *insanity, mind thrust,* and *psychic crush*. As most of the kalaraq's psi-like abilities allow Will saves, it usually softens up its enemy with its soul binding touch before using its powers.

A kalaraq's natural weapons are considered evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Night Terrors (Su): A kalaraq quori can split off aspects of itself and send these dark eyes to prowl Dal Quor in search of mortal spirits. This allows the kalaraq to use *nightmare* three times per night as the spell cast by an 18th-level sorcerer (DC 22 Will save negates). The kalaraq does not have to enter a trance. Victims who fail their initial saving throws must immediately make an additional DC 22 Will save. Any victim who fails this additional Will save takes 1d4 points of ability damage to its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. This is a mind-affecting effect, and the save DCs are Charisma-based.

Psi-Like Abilities: At will—*dispel psionics, ego whip, far hand, inertial armor, mass cloud mind, mindlink, mind thrust, psionic blast, psionic charm;* 3/day—*energy wave, insanity, psychic crush;* 1/day—*focused mind seed, personal mind blank*. Manifester level 18th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Soul Binding (Su): The incorporeal touch of a kalaraq tears at its victim's mind and soul. Its incorporeal touch deals 1d6 points of cold damage and 1d4+1 points of Wisdom damage. This damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. In addition, the victim must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or be confused as the *confusion* spell cast by an 18th-level caster.

If a kalaraq reduces its opponent's Wisdom to 0, it binds the soul of its victim to one of its many eyes. This kills the victim instantly. Even a dreaming character dies if reduced to Wisdom of 0 from this attack. The kalaraq gains access to all of the memories of the victim (although it does not gain any actual skill ranks or class levels) and gains a +10 insight bonus on Disguise checks made to impersonate the victim. A victim who dies to this ability cannot return to life through any means short of a *wish* or *miracle* spell until the kalaraq dies. A dead kalaraq automatically releases all the souls it binded.

All-Around Vision (Ex): The many eyes of the kalaraq provide it with a +4 bonus on Spot and Search checks. A kalaraq cannot be flanked.

Spying Eyes (Ex): A kalaraq can send its many eyes to scout and spy at a distance. This grants it the same effect as the *greater prying eyes* spell with an unlimited duration, but the kalaraq can only use 20 spying eyes per day. These eyes fully regenerate after 24 hours.

Swarm of Eyes (Su): A kalaraq can disperse its physical form into a swarm of eyes. This transformation takes a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. While in swarm form, a kalaraq becomes a size Large swarm composed of Fine creatures. Physical attacks, including ghost touch weapons, cannot harm it, although a weapon that deals energy damage (flaming, frost) can still deal that damage on a successful hit. A kalaraq in swarm form uses its soul binding ability on any creature that occupies its space at the end of its move. Any creature that begins its turn in the same space as the swarm must succeed at a DC 26 Fort save or suffer 1 round of nausea. The kalaraq swarm form has all of the abilities and vulnerabilities common to all swarms, as described on page 237 of the *Monster Manual*.

True Seeing (Su): The many eyes of a kalaraq provide it with the benefit of a continuous *true seeing* spell, with a range of 120 feet.

Kalaraq Inspired

At the time of the kalashtar exodus, only 12 kalaraq-possessed Inspired lived on EBERRON. While possible that new kalaraqs have arisen over the last few millennia, few of these spirits exist and each has duties and schemes to attend to in Dal Quor. Every kalaraq has an Inspired vessel awaiting its use, but a kalaraq only manifests on EBERRON under the most dire circumstances.

A typical kalaraq quori has 20 ranks of Autohypnosis, Concentration, Psicraft, and Sense Motive; 10 ranks in Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Hide, Intimidate, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (psionics), Knowledge (the planes), Listen, Move Silently, Perform (oratory), Search, and Spot.

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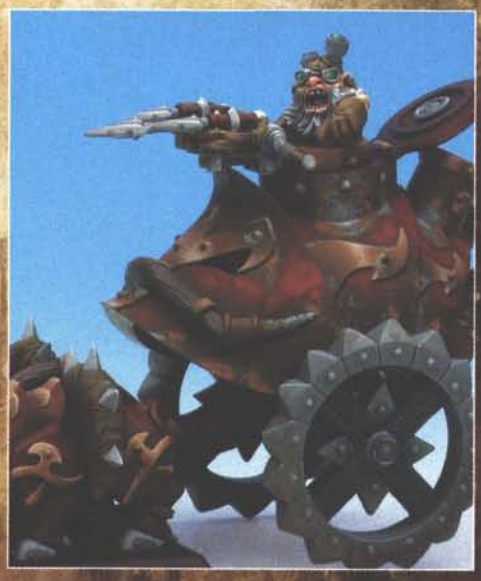

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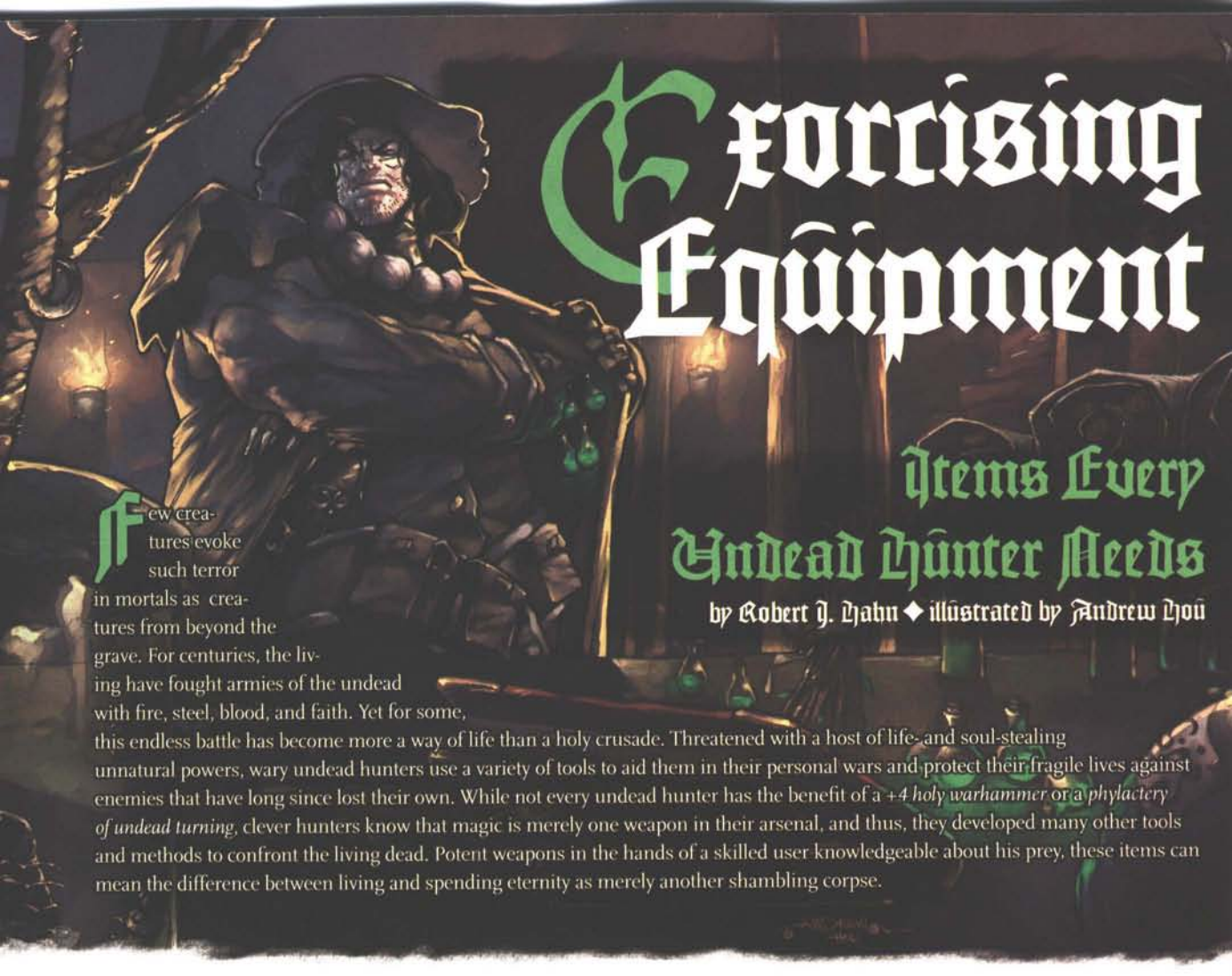


Exorcising Equipment

Items Every Undead Hunter Needs

by Robert J. Hahn ◆ illustrated by Andrew Hou

Few creatures evoke such terror in mortals as creatures from beyond the grave. For centuries, the living have fought armies of the undead with fire, steel, blood, and faith. Yet for some, this endless battle has become more a way of life than a holy crusade. Threatened with a host of life- and soul-stealing unnatural powers, wary undead hunters use a variety of tools to aid them in their personal wars and protect their fragile lives against enemies that have long since lost their own. While not every undead hunter has the benefit of a *+4 holy warhammer* or a *phylactery of undead turning*, clever hunters know that magic is merely one weapon in their arsenal, and thus, they developed many other tools and methods to confront the living dead. Potent weapons in the hands of a skilled user knowledgeable about his prey, these items can mean the difference between living and spending eternity as merely another shambling corpse.

Blood Thickener

This alchemical substance causes a character's blood to thicken so it moves slower within the body. When ingested, blood thickener causes the character to become slightly sluggish, imposing a –2 penalty to his Dexterity score for 12 hours, but it provides a +2 alchemical bonus to Constitution for that time. Additionally, a dying character (one reduced to between –1 and –9 hit points) loses 1 hit point every 2 rounds instead of every round.

A DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check is required to create blood thickener.

Book of Prayers

A book of prayers is an ornately illustrated tome, consecrated to a specific god. With book in hand, a character who worships the same deity as the one the book is devoted to can take a full round action to pray, chanting scriptures from the book of prayers. The character reading aloud from the text may make a DC 10 Charisma check to aid a cleric of the book's deity in her attempt to turn undead. If successful, the praying character provides the cleric a +2 bonus on her turning check. A cleric can only be aided by one other character using a book of prayers. If a character attempts to use a book of prayers and is not a member of the faith to which the book is consecrated, his attempts to use it always fail.

Creating a book of prayers requires 1 rank of Knowledge (religion) and a DC 20 Craft (writing) check.

Holy or Unholy Candle

The wax of this alchemically treated candle is infused with spiritual incenses and soaked in holy or unholy water for three nights before it is used to create a candle. Holy candles shed a pure yellow-white illumination, while unholy candles cast a flickering, deep purple glow. Each radiates light in a 5-foot radius and burns for 1 hour.

Clerics standing within the illumination of a holy candle gain a +2 bonus on their turning check results when attempting to turn or rebuke undead. Clerics who stand in the light of an unholy candle gain a +2 bonus on their turning check results when commanding or rebuking undead. A cleric can only be aided by one burning candle at a time.

Creating a holy or unholy candle requires 1 rank of Knowledge (religion) and a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check.

Holy Wafers

Holy wafers refer to any food specifically created and sanctified for use in a religious ceremony. Commonly in the form of small, stylized bread wafers impressed with religious images, holy wafers have few uses outside of sacred rituals. However, these unassuming wafers are also one of the most effective methods of dispatching vampires. Destroying a vampire's body is often difficult without access to powerful spells like *disintegration*, and even staking the creature and burning it might prove dangerous if the stake burns first. Yet filling a vampire's mouth with holy

wafers and cutting off its head is a relatively simple feat and effectively prevents it from returning to undeath. Divine spells that create food, such as *goodberry*, can also be used to the same effect as holy wafers.

Holy wafers can be purchased at most temples or shrines.

Mummy Mites

These ant-sized insects voraciously feed on dead flesh. No one knows whether these ravenous vermin are natural creatures or magically manipulated creations, but regardless, they make formidable weapons against all kinds of corporeal undead. Mummy mites are often stored in glass flasks as tiny, gray inert eggs. These flasks are treated as thrown splash weapons.

Upon hitting a target, a flask of mummy mites breaks, spilling eggs over a 5-foot square. These eggs do not react to living creatures, but if they land within 5 feet of dead flesh, they immediately hatch and attack on the next round. Active mummy mites prey upon necrotic flesh, regardless of whether it's moving, and attack any corpse or corporeal undead creature nearby. Once they find a body to attack, they feast on it to the exclusion of all other food sources for 1 minute, after which they die. Although mummy mites do not attack living creatures, those who occupy the same space as a mummy mite swarm are distracted as normal.

Mummy Mites: CR 1; Fine vermin (swarm); HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 22, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +1; Grp —; Atk/Full Atk swarm (1d6); Space/Reach 10 ft./—; SA distraction; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immune to weapon damage, swarm traits, vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 1, Dex 18, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Spot +4.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn in the same space as a mummy mite swarm must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: A mummy mite swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

Portable Pyre

A good undead hunter takes advantage of the absolute stupidity of mindless undead. A portable pyre is essentially a bundle of oil-soaked logs and tindertwigs bound together. When untied and quickly rolled out over an empty 5-foot square, a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity, the tindertwigs immediately ignite the highly flammable kindling. A portable pyre can also be unrolled more carefully so it does not ignite, an act that takes a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. Once laid out in this manner, the roll ignites if exposed to fire. Creatures that enter the same square as a lit portable pyre suffer 1d6 points of fire damage for each round they remain in the square. A portable pyre burns for 10 minutes, although 10 gallons of water extinguish the flames. It cannot be used again after being unrolled. Portable pyres cannot be wielded as weapons and are only effective when laid upon a flat surface, making them particularly useful in small hallways or when placed in the path of turned undead.

Creating a portable pyre requires a DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check.

New Undead-Hunting Equipment

Item	Cost	Weight
Blood Thickener	75 gp	1 lb.
Book of Prayers	50 gp	3 lb.
Holy or Unholy Candle	75 gp	—
Holy Wafers (10)	2 sp	—
Mummy Mites	75 gp	1 lb.
Portable Pyre	10 gp	15 lb.
Reinforced Sheath	10 gp	2 lb.

Reinforced Sheath

A reinforced sheath turns a bladed slashing or piercing weapon into a bludgeoning weapon. To accomplish this, the blade remains in the reinforced sheath, imposing a –2 penalty on all attack rolls made with the now top-heavy weapon. Originally developed for swords, reinforced sheaths can be specially made for practically any slashing or piercing weapons. Attacks made with magic weapons do not convey their properties through a reinforced sheath, although masterwork reinforced sheaths can be created and enhanced separately.

Creating a reinforced sheath requires a DC 25 Craft (weaponsmithing) check.

Other Useful Undead-Fighting Gear

The *Player's Handbook* presents many excellent items perfect for fighting undead. Canny adventures preparing to hunt the living dead might benefit from the following equipment and suggestions.

Animals with Scent: Many animals have senses of smell far beyond those of normal characters. An appropriately trained bear, cat, dog, or even horse could detect the presence of rotting flesh under even the most unfavorable circumstances. Besides their ability to warn their masters of the approach of many kinds of undead, many animals also make potent allies in a battle.

Cleric's Vestments: Many intelligent undead recognize and are rightly fearful of clerics and priests. Just wearing the holy vestments of a particular faith might be enough to prevent an attack by wary undead. However, for all the undead that fear clerics, just as many single out such characters to dispatch first.

Fire: Although many undead have significant defenses and resistances against specific types of energy, most remain vulnerable to fire. Whether it comes from oil, torches, or fire-based spells without instantaneous effects (such as a *wall of fire*), unintelligent undead don't react to put out flames consuming them and can easily be dispatched by lighting them afire and leaving them to burn.

Holy Water: Rightfully so, intelligent undead fear and avoid few other items as much as holy water.

Mirrors: Mirrors have a wide variety of uses, but they are particularly useful when facing vampires. Mirrors can keep them at bay as effectively as a strongly presented holy symbol.

Ranged and Reach Weapons: Keeping undead at a distance is sound advice for even the most powerful undead hunter, as is always having a weapon that allows you to damage your quarry without getting close. Mindless undead do not consider strategy when they battle and often make themselves vulnerable to attacks of opportunity from reach weapons. Many undead are ponderous creatures and have no defense against characters with ranged weapons or who use hit and run tactics.

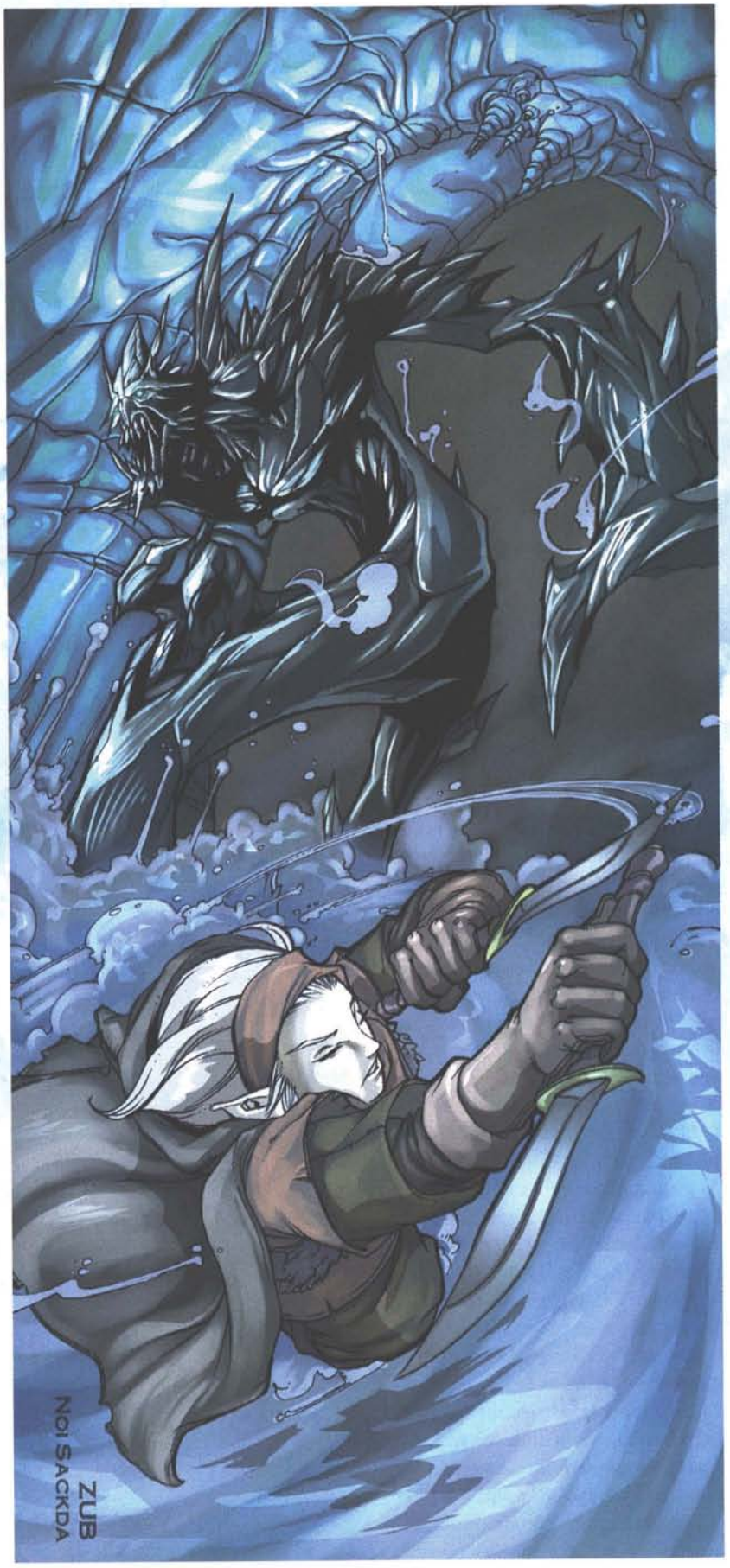
Rotted Meat: Leaving rotted meat in an area can attract all manner of ravenous undead, primarily ghouls and ghasts. Since most undead are too stupid or hungry to care where their meal comes from, strategically placed food can bait all manner of ambushes.

Tripping Weapons: Guisarmes, halberds, spiked chains, and similar weapons that can make trip attacks are especially useful against the undead. As zombies can only take a single action in a round, tripping them might be an effective defense.

by Yury Pavlotsky
illustrated by Noi Sackda

CHILLED TO THE BONE

ICY ENEMIES FROM ARCTIC ENVIRONS



Winter holds many lands in an icy grip. With its chilling breath and crushing avalanches, its fury can sweep away whole towns and freeze the souls of even the most determined travelers. Among the numerous creatures that make their homes in these arctic regions, no beings inspire more dread than those that refuse to live at the whim of winter's wrath, but rather embody it.

Spawned of harsh mountains of ice and snow, these arctic terrors chill even the most heroic souls. From the winterling's frosty malevolence and

the living avalanche that is the black ice golem, to the undead steaming soldiers and icy prisoners, these creatures add further menace to an already deadly environment.

Cold regions can be remarkably diverse places, ranging from tundra and snow-capped mountains to icy lakes and streams. These monsters likewise inhabit a variety of cold environments, and could be found in nearly any frozen area of a campaign world.

BLACK ICE GOLEM

Huge Construct (Cold)
Hit Dice: 22d10+40 (161 hp)
Initiative: –1
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class: 25 (–2 size, –1 Dex, +18 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 25
Base Attack/Grapple: +16/+33
Attack: Slam +23 melee (1d8+9 plus 1d6 cold plus energy drain)
Full Attack: 2 slams +23 melee (1d8+9 plus 1d6 cold plus energy drain)
Space/Reach: 15 ft./15 ft.
Special Attacks: Cold, cold aura, energy drain, ice shards
Special Qualities: Construct traits, damage reduction 10/bludgeoning and good, darkvision 60 ft., icewalking, immunity to cold and magic, low-light vision, vulnerability to fire
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +7
Abilities: Str 28, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
Environment: Any cold
Organization: Solitary or gang (2–4)
Challenge Rating: 14
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: 23–42 (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

Looming over you is a form like a midnight glacier: giant, black, and ominous. Crudely shaped into a humanoid form, the unwrought slabs that make up its body glisten with the peculiar sheen of frozen blood and, deep within, seem to bubble with a profane, unnatural life.

Black ice golems are foul creations, clumsily sculpted from ice exposed to negative energy and great blocks of frozen blood. The resulting creature stands over 20 feet tall, weighs nearly 3,000 pounds, and stains the snow wherever it steps with great, bloody footprints.

A black ice golem's body is coarse and only vaguely humanoid, merely a pile of glistening icy black slabs that at times seem unconnected from each other and emanate an aura of bitter, unnatural cold. The golem's only notable features are its eyes, two points of sanguine liquid within the ice of its smooth, flat face.

COMBAT

The black ice golem is a mindless creature that obeys its creator's commands to the best of its ability. It can dole out tremendous amounts of damage in melee combat with its fists, piercing ice shards, and cold aura. These abilities make the black ice golem a dangerous if unsubtle combatant, and often the mere sight of this walking mountain is enough to instill fear into all but the most stalwart opponents.

Cold (Ex): A black ice golem's body generates intense cold, causing opponents to take an extra 1d6 points of cold damage every time the creature succeeds on a slam attack. Creatures attacking a black ice golem unarmed or with natural weapons take this same cold damage each time one of their attacks hits.

Cold Aura (Ex): Anyone within 20 feet of a black ice golem must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or take 2d6 points of cold damage per round from the intense cold. The save DC is Constitution based.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a black ice golem's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 16 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the black ice golem gains 5 temporary hit points.

Ice Shards (Su): As a free action once every 1d4+1 rounds, a black ice golem can generate a spray of deadly ice shards from its body, dealing 2d6 points of piercing damage and 1d6 points of cold damage to all creatures within 10 feet, and blinding them for 1d4 rounds. Creatures that succeed on a DC 21 Reflex save take only half damage and are not blinded. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Ice Walking (Ex): This ability works like the *spider climb* spell but the surface the black ice golem climbs must be icy.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A black ice golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature.

Fire spells and effects affect the golem normally, even if they permit spell resistance (and note the golem's vulnerability to fire).

A magical attack that deals cold damage heals the ice golem for 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points.

CONSTRUCTION

A black ice golem's body is made from huge blocks of ice and frozen blood infused with negative energy. The materials must weigh at least 5,000 pounds, and 20 HD worth of creatures must be sacrificed and their blood used in its creation. The ceremonial sacrifices and corrupt empowering of the ice requires 15,000 gp worth of rare ingredients. Assembling the body requires a DC 15 Craft (sculpting) check.

CL 16th; Craft Construct (see page 303 of the Monster Manual), *cone of cole, eneravation, wall of ice,* caster must be at least 16th level; Price 190,000 gp; Cost 100,000 gp + 7,600 XP.

ICY PRISONER

Medium Undead (Cold)
Hit Dice: 7d12 (45 hp)
Initiative: +6
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), burrow 30 ft., swim 30 ft.
Armor Class: 19 (+2 Dex, +7 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+11
Attack: Claw +7 melee (1d6+4 plus 1d6 cold plus frostbite)
Full Attack: 2 claws +7 melee (1d6+4 plus 1d6 cold plus frostbite) and bite +2 melee (1d4+2 plus 1d6 cold plus frostbite)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Cold, create spawn, frostbite, improved grab
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits, vulnerability to fire
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +6
Abilities: Str 18, Dex, 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15
Skills: Balance +12, Hide +12, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Spot +6
Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack
Environment: Cold aquatic
Organization: Solitary or pack (2–9)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 8–10 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: —

Erupting in an explosion of ice and snow, a slick, frostbitten body bursts from the frozen waters below. It glares at you with cold eyes and hefts its ice-encrusted corpse in your direction.

Icy prisoners are undead creatures created from the bodies of those drowned in icy lakes, ponds, or streams. These creatures spend most of their existences morbidly bobbing below the ice of their watery tombs, waiting to ambush and drown passersby who come too near.

Icy prisoners appear as grotesque, humanoid forms entombed in ice-covered bodies of water. The dead, frostbitten skin of these horrors lies pallid beneath the useless tatters of their remaining winter clothing. From a face sickly discolored by extreme cold, an icy prisoner's eyes glow with a pale, watery blue illumination, and their lingering hair hangs down frozen to their sallow faces.

COMBAT

An icy prisoner lies in wait until it sees a target, then pounds on the ice above it in mock-death throes, hoping to draw the target closer to investigate. It then bursts through the ice and attempts to grapple the unfortunate soul. If successful, the icy prisoner tries to pull the victim into the freezing water and holds him until he drowns.

An icy prisoner can burrow only through ice and snow.

Cold (Ex): An icy prisoner generates intense cold, causing opponents to take an extra 1d6 points of cold damage every time the creature succeeds on a slam attack. Creatures attacking an icy prisoner unarmed or with natural weapons take this same cold damage each time one of their attacks hits.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid drowned by an icy prisoner becomes an icy prisoner in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are not under the control of the icy prisoner that created them. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Frostbite (Ex): A creature that sustains cold damage from an icy prisoner's melee attacks must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become frostbitten. Creatures suffering from frostbite are fatigued (cannot run or charge, suffer a –2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity). These penalties end when the cold damage is healed. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an icy prisoner must hit a creature of its size or smaller with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

STEAMING SOLDIER

Medium Undead (Cold)
Hit Dice: 4d12+3 (29 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+5
Attack: Claw +5 melee (1d4+3 plus 1d6 cold plus paralysis)
Full Attack: 2 claws +5 melee (1d4+3 plus 1d6 cold plus paralysis)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Cold, create spawn, drain heat, paralysis
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, steam cloud, undead traits, vulnerability to fire
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con —, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 16
Skills: Hide +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Spot +9
Feats: Combat Reflexes, Toughness
Environment: Any cold
Organization: Solitary, gang (2-5), or pack (6-11)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 5–8 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: —

A ghostly shape appears through the dense fog, awkwardly ambling in your direction. As it nears, you can see that it is a shambling humanoid body, riddled with wicked lesions. These gory wounds perpetually steam the fog that surrounds you.

Steaming soldiers are undead born of battles on frigid tundra and unforgiving ice fields. These monstrosities arise when wounded warriors are left to die on the battlefield, and the icy landscape drains their warmth. Their name comes from their open wounds that fill the areas around them with clouds of steam. These creatures seek the natural warmth drained from them in death, and they terrorize travelers and small settlements in cold areas.

Steaming soldiers are difficult to see due to the roiling mists that surround them, and they are usually only glimpsed as indistinct shapes in the fog. Behind their grim veil of fog, they are horrible creatures to behold, their undead nature evident from their deathly blue skin, luminous red eyes, and great gaping wounds that seep billowing clouds of steam.

COMBAT

Steaming soldiers prefer to attack from surprise, using their ever-present mists for concealment. They close to melee as

quickly as possible in order to claw and paralyze foes. Once a target is paralyzed, steaming soldiers use their drain heat ability to finish off the target and create a new steaming soldier.

Cold (Ex): A steaming soldier generates intense cold, causing opponents to take an extra 1d6 points of cold damage every time the creature succeeds on a slam attack. Creatures attacking a steaming soldier unarmed or with natural weapons take this same cold damage each time one of their attacks hits.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a steaming soldier becomes a steaming soldier in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the steaming soldier that created them and remain enslaved until its destruction. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Drain Heat (Su): A steaming soldier can drain the heat from a victim by pulling it into a horrific kiss. A steaming soldier that makes a successful grapple check and pins its foe drains heat. The victim suffers 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round the pin is maintained.

Paralysis (Ex): Creatures that suffer cold damage from a steaming soldier's melee attacks must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be covered in a skin of frost that paralyzes them for 1d4+1 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Steam Cloud (Su): A steaming soldier is always surrounded by a billowing cloud of mist that functions as the spell *fog cloud*, except that it always remains centered on the steaming soldier. Steaming soldiers can see through this mist and natural fog, suffering no miss chance. Magic fog affects visibility for them as normal.

WINTERLING

Small Fey (Cold)
Hit Dice: 7d6 (24 hp)
Initiative: +8
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 30 ft. (good)
Armor Class: 18 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/2
Attack: Short sword +8 melee (1d4–1) or longbow +8 ranged (1d6–1/x3)
Full Attack: Short sword +8 melee (1d4–1) or longbow +8 ranged (1d6–1/x3)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/cold iron, immunity to cold, low-light vision, spell resistance 18, vulnerability to fire
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +6
Abilities: Str 8, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 17
Skills: Bluff +13, Escape Artist +9, Hide +18*, Knowledge (nature) +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +14, Spot +11, Tumble +9
Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse
Environment: Cold hills and mountains
Organization: Solitary, gang (2-5), or band (6-15)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: No coins, 50% goods, 50% items
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: 8–10 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: +5

A swiftly moving, stark white creature darts and wheels nearby. Unnaturally lithe, the small humanoid has severe features with radically slanted purple eyes and a manic smile. The creature flits about wildly on what look to be a pair of butterfly wings sprouting from its back, frozen and shattered into sharp, jagged points.

Winterlings are malicious fey that live high in snowy mountains and hills. With cruel senses of humor, they play deadly pranks on groups of mountain travelers, causing avalanches, landslides, cave-ins, and the like. Such acts often make them the real culprits behind local legends of haunted mountain passes. Winterlings also enjoy pulling smaller pranks on solitary travelers, like putting out their campfires or shaking tree branches to dump snow on top of them.

Winterlings stand roughly 2-1/2 feet tall. They look like white-skinned, white-haired elves with sharp, exaggerated features and gossamer wings. Their eyes tend toward light blues and violets with hair the shades of ice and snow. Reveling in the most wickedly cold weather as the fey of more temperate lands do in spring, winterlings have little need for clothing, but many wear a few icy bangles as ornamentation. Winterlings speak Elven and Sylvan, with some knowing additional tongues.

COMBAT

Upon encountering other creatures, a winterling uses its ranged weapons and spell-like abilities to harass them. If their victims react violently, it flees, only to attack targets later.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*chill metal* (DC 15), *fog cloud*, *gust of wind* (DC 15), *quench* (DC 16), *sleet storm*, *warp wood* (DC 15); 1/day—*ice storm* (DC 17); Caster level 8th. The save DC's are Charisma-based.

Skills: *In frigid areas of snow and ice a winterling's Hide bonus increases to +26.

PLOT HOOKS

Whether threatening arctic lands on their own or participating in some larger plot, the creatures presented in this article can be used in a wide variety of ways. Following are several suggestions and possibilities for adventures incorporating these frozen monstrosities into your campaign.

Black Ice Golems

A local fisherman finds a strange sculpture of black ice. Fearful, the fisherman keeps his distance and heads back to town to inform the local constable, who in turn sends the PCs to investigate the situation. Unfortunately, when the PCs arrive, they find nothing but a trail of craterous bloody footprints. It turns out that the crude statue is in fact a black ice golem that begins rampaging through the area.

The local forces are woefully unprepared for the situation, as nothing seems to even slow the rampaging titan. The constable entreats the PCs for their aid, but can they derail 3,000 pounds of black ice before it destroys everything? The key to doing so might be revealing the golem's master and the reason for the creature's construction.

Icy Prisoners

The region's annual midwinter festival culminates in a large ice skating contest held on a nearby pond. However, this year a terrible secret threatens disaster: An icy prisoner lurks beneath the placid-seeming ice.

The icy prisoner was a traveler who, while passing through the area, was murdered by one of the town's inhabitants—a serial killer. The killer hides his deeds by throwing the bodies of his victims into the pond, but at least one victim was transformed into an icy prisoner.

After one of the locals goes missing, the PC's are hired to investigate these mysterious disappearances. Can they trace the bodies to the killer and reveal his crimes before more vengeful icy prisoners arise?

Steaming Soldiers

Steaming soldiers normally launch uncoordinated attacks against small groups and villages in cold areas. However, something recently has been amassing the creatures in numbers large enough to threaten the entire countryside. The huge gathering of steaming soldiers has literally put a pall on the regional capital, as enormous clouds of fog obscure everything in sight. The townsfolk are sick with fright and an attack could come at any moment.

What is the force behind this strange coalition? Can the PC's find what holds the undead army together and destroy it before the capital is overwhelmed?

Winterlings

Although evil, winterlings are part of the natural world and frequently join forces with druids in arctic areas. While such alliances sometimes form to combat a natural threat, sheer hatred of civilized folk and the encroachment of civilization upon the natural world is most often the reason.

A village built at the foot of a mountain has heard uneasy rumblings from the slopes of late. Travelers frequently disappear, avalanches become all too common, and the mountain threatens to bury the entire village. Divinations have revealed that the forces of nature seem angry. This anger stems from the arrival of a group of fire cultists inhabiting the core of the mountain—actually an extinct volcano—who are attempting to reactivate it. The PCs must journey to find a local druid who lives among a tribe of winterlings to learn about and stop this plot.

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by Joshua Cole
illustrated by Tom Fowler

GET MORE BANG FOR YOUR BONES

animate dead tricks

Another day, another graveyard; many necromancers limit their use of the *animate dead* spell to that dreary philosophy. Humanoid zombies and skeletons march next to the occasional undead steed, while more dangerous creatures await creation by spells like *create undead* and *create greater undead*. Fortunately for practitioners of the black arts—and unfortunately for everyone else—powerful undead await only a creative necromancer to unleash them upon the world!

The best way to create a better walking corpse, after all, is to find a better corpse.

KILLER ZOMBIES

Finding the right creature to animate as a zombie presents two difficulties. First and foremost, zombies make only a single attack per round. Secondly, creating a zombie doubles the base creature's Hit Dice, halving the number of controllable undead created by the spell. Normally, skeletons serve a necromancer better than zombies, although when he needs a flying monster or simply desires tougher servants, the necromancer often turns to zombies.

Big creatures with relatively few Hit Dice make the best zombies. A zombie's reach, damage, and natural armor all scale up with its size. Since zombies can only make one attack each round, you need either a significant number of weak zombies or a few big zombies to be most effective.

The only other significant abilities that a zombie transfers from the base creature are speeds, natural armor, Strength, and Dexterity. Zombies created from creatures with a burrow, climb, fly, or swim speed can use those movement types, and a high speed helps compensate for a zombie's inability to run.

One last thing to look for in a zombie is a base creature with only one natural attack. Such creatures add 1-1/2 times their Strength bonus on damage rolls, just like a character with a two-handed weapon. Zombies can only make a single attack each round anyway, so make the most of it!

SUPERIOR SKELETONS

Some creatures don't make good zombies but can work quite well as skeletons. Skeletons offer great optimization potential, especially compared to zombies. A necromancer may animate twice his caster level in Hit Dice of skeletons per casting of the *animate dead* spell, and he can control up to four times his caster level. Skeletons can get multiple attacks each round, and they even use ranged attacks effectively.

As with zombies, bigger is better, although a skeleton's Armor Class doesn't improve as much with larger size categories. For skeletons, you should look for base creatures with multiple natural attacks. Most creatures with more than two attacks have a relatively high CR, making them difficult to summon (such as with the *summon monster* and *summon nature's ally* spells) but not to animate. Like zombies, skeletons retain their Strength and Dexterity scores, so try to find creatures with high scores in those abilities. Finally, look for creatures that deal better damage for their size than the skeleton template's listed claw damage.

Winged skeletons can't fly. However, skeletons can take advantage of other movement types. A very fast creature, like a deinonychus, retains its speed and running ability, making it a formidable mount.

HYBRID HORRORS

Few creatures or characters prove more dangerous than a necromancer who pairs with a powerful transmuter. Such a duo can combine *animate dead* and various bizarre breeding experiments to produce a corps of elite undead capable of tearing apart any living creature.

How?

It's simple, really. The necromancer's level limits the number of zombies and skeletons he can control. Monsters usually don't gain more Hit Dice with the addition of a template, but they generally do gain ability score increases, often to Strength and Dexterity.

For example, a 6th-level necromancer can control two ankheg zombies. Alternatively, he can control two half-dragon ankheg zombies, two half-fiend ankheg zombies, or even two half-fiend half-dragon ankheg zombies (remember, you can stack multiple templates on the same creature). Of course, your DM might not always present such creatures for your party to slay, but that's why your necromancer has a transmuter ally with access to *polymorph any object*. The skeleton of a squirrel can become the dead body of a dragon turtle with the casting of a single spell.

OPTIMIZED ZOMBIES AND SKELETONS

Necromancers seeking the best corpses to animate should consider the creatures listed on the Top Three Animate Dead Choices table. The primary creature or creatures for each caster level generally make good fighters as undead. Others work well as backup fighters, mounts for the necromancer and his allies, or for some other useful attribute. Keep in mind that a single *animate dead* spell can animate both skeletons and zombies if the creatures' total Hit Dice do not exceed twice the caster's level.

TOP THREE ANIMATE DEAD CHOICES

Caster Level	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
5th	5-headed hydra skeletons (2)	10-headed hydra skeleton	Vrock skeleton
6th	6-headed hydra skeletons (2)	12-headed hydra skeleton	Glabrezu skeleton
7th	7-headed hydra skeletons (2)	Wyvern skeletons (2)	Athach skeleton
8th	8-headed hydra skeletons (2)	Pegasus zombies (2)	Marilith skeleton
9th	Pit fiend skeleton	9-headed hydra skeletons (2)	6-headed hydra skeletons (3)
10th	Young adult gold dragon skeleton	10-headed hydra skeletons (2)	Pit fiend skeleton
11th	11-headed hydra skeleton (2)	Young adult gold dragon skeleton	10-headed hydra skeletons (2)
12th	12-headed hydra skeleton (2)	6-headed hydra skeletons (4)	Glabrezu skeletons (2)
13th	Young red dragon skeletons (2)	12-headed hydra skeleton (2)	6-headed hydra skeletons (4)
14th	Athach skeletons (2)	7-headed hydra skeletons (4)	Remorhaz zombies (2)
15th	Cauchemar skeletons (2)	Horned devil skeletons (2)	5-headed hydra skeletons (6)
16th	Marilith skeletons (2)	8-headed hydra skeletons (4)	Deinonychus skeletons (8)
17th	Juvenile gold dragon skeletons (2)	Cloud giant skeletons (2)	Marilith skeletons (2)
18th	Pit fiend skeletons (2)	Juvenile gold dragon skeletons (2)	9-headed hydra skeletons (4)
19th	Young adult red dragon skeletons (2)	Storm giant skeletons (2)	Pit fiend skeletons (2)
20th	Young adult gold dragon skeletons (2)	10-headed hydra skeletons (4)	Titan skeletons (2)

by F. Wesley Schneider
illustrated by Peter Bergting

The Ecology of Night Hags

Begone, you hag who lurks in dreams, who drains our life through cries and screams. Gods bless this ward to keep me whole, and keep the night hag from my soul.
—Van Richten's Guide to Witches

Innumerable fears plague mortals, but among them fear of the dark, the intangible, and the unknown rank as some of the greatest. Hailing from the bleakest hells of the Outer Planes' endless infinities, countless creatures embody these most potent of fears. Among these extraplanar terrors, no one cruel breed so seeks to wreak horror and spread suffering as the nightmare queens of Hades, the sinister and hateful night hags. With a lust for power that rivals even the most ambitious devils combined with the hungry bloodlust of demons, night hags insatiably crave that which only the living provide. Commoner or prince, human or elf, all have reason to fear, as night hags hunger equally for the souls of all mortals.

Having preyed upon the living for countless centuries, warnings of night hags and their powers have become the stuff of superstitions and old wives' tales. Although little truth remains in such country advice, many such tales find their basis in actual practices capable of warding off a night hag's predatory wrath. This article examines the nature of night hags, collecting an assortment of such rumors, legends, and advice, to best prepare those who would face these otherworldly horrors.

History of Night Hags

For many extraplanar creatures, it is enough to say that they always were, and thus they are now. However, night hags are as ancient as any fiend, and their similarities to the hags of the Material Plane raises the peculiar question of their origins.

Many scholars speculate that night hags are merely planar relatives of normal hags; another breed, native to the Outer Planes, and different only in the same ways that annis hags differ from green hags or sea hags. However, the fearful abilities and cruel cunning of night hags make them seem like ideals of the hag race. Regardless of their origins, most of those who investigate the specifics of night hags are interested in a much different history: the countless stories and towering records of terrorized countries and lifeless villages that owe their ruin to these hag queens.

PHYSIOLOGY OF NIGHT HAGS

Even when compared to other hags, night hags appear as grotesque crones. Said to look like extraordinarily ugly human women, such a statement does an irreparable disservice to the gender of that species. Thus, a more apt description might compare them to small, female trolls; their skin ranging from a light purple-blue all the way to near black and blistered with the foul planar diseases they carry.

Nearly all night hags wear wild manes of coarse black hair with bones, severed fingers, and small trinkets woven into it in whatever manner they believe makes them appear most threatening. This grotesque coif often dangles over a night hag's face and much of her body, possibly hiding her rows of awkwardly protruding pointed teeth dripping with diseased saliva. Above, a pair of deep hollows veil hellish red pupils, little more than maddened pinpricks looking out over a sharply pointed nose.

To augment their fearsome appearances, night hags often cover their grotesquely emaciated bodies in self-inflicted tattoolike scars. This sickly, tormented facade belies a night hag's significant strength and the threat of her wicked claws. However, many of a night hag's joints seem to bend in awkward ways, disturbing to mortal witnesses, which make them relatively slow and ungainly creatures.

NIGHT HAG KNOWLEDGE

A character might know something about night hags from stories or prior studies. The following table shows the results of a Knowledge (the planes) check as it relates to night hags.

Knowledge (the planes) DC	Result
10	Some foul creatures haunt the dreams of mortals, wearing them down with increasingly horrible nightmares that eventually kill.
15	Night hags are fearful beings from the Outer Planes, more powerful than other hags, that take the forms of mortals and hunger for the flesh and souls of innocent creatures.
20	Night hags are mistresses of nightmares that put their enemies to sleep and strangle them while unconscious. They are immune to many forces that affect mortals, such as fire and cold, and they never sleep.
25	Night hags are far different creatures from normal hags, with vast knowledge of forbidden secrets and the power to become ethereal. Fortunately, night hags are vulnerable to weapons of magic cold iron.
30	Night hags form alliances with a multitude of evil extraplanar creatures, know much of their ways, and afflict their enemies with the diseases of the lower planes. All night hags carry *heartstones*, which they need to become ethereal and which hold the power to cure any disease.

Night hags reproduce in a manner exceedingly foul to mortal minds, creating young to serve in their coveys or as servants. Using their *polymorph* spell-like ability to disguise themselves as mortal women, night hags seduce men into a meeting that as likely as not culminates in the males' deaths. After such a coupling, a night hag becomes pregnant for a length of time normal for women of her mate's species. At the end of this period, the night hag gives birth to a dark-haired female child otherwise indistinguishable from others of her mate's species. Having no concept of maternal instincts, night hags always foster their children, usually to unsuspecting good-aligned creatures and even with the child's father if he still lives.

At any time between the child's first birthday and puberty, a night hag might return to perform a series of despoiling rites that culminates in the child's transformation into a normal night hag. The process begins with an initial visitation during which the night hag must engage her child in a foul ceremony for an uninterrupted hour. After this initial ritual, the night hag must return three times, each visit thirteen days after the

last. On these visits, the night hag must suckle the child and feed it the flesh of a living larva, a process that takes an hour. If any of these feedings are interrupted, or if the night hag can't access the child by the end of the proper day, the child cannot be transformed into a night hag. Otherwise, the end of the final feeding initiates a rapid and irreversible transformation, and within an hour the child becomes a full-grown night hag. Uncaring of their daughters but covetous of their uses, night hags often foster more children than they have any intention of transforming into full-blooded night hags, essentially keeping spare children littered across the planes should their plans require more servants or their current broods dwindle.

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIETY OF NIGHT HAGS

Naturally cruel beings, night hags obsess over dreams of power and endless feasts of mortal souls. They think nothing of other creatures except in how they relate to the night hags' desires. This leads night hags to relegate any creature less powerful than them to the position of either slave or meal, with slaves often merely serving as future meals. Night hags manipulate and bargain with creatures they don't believe they can defeat, in the hopes of extorting as much use as possible and perhaps leaving them vulnerable.

Night hags pay little respect to the concept of racial privilege and contend with others of their race in the same manner they deal with all other creatures, with strong night hags subjugating their weaker sisters. Night hags sometimes deal with the hags of the Material Plane but never as equals and always as masters. These extraplanar hags maintain a deeply rooted sense of superiority when it comes to normal hags and cruelly dominate either an individual or whole covey. Selfish and supercilious in the extreme, night hags rarely form coveys with their own kind and most assuredly never with lesser hags of the Material Plane. When a covey of night hags does form, it most often consists of a dominant night hag and two weaker night hags or even three night hags forced by a more powerful night hag to do her bidding. These weaker night hags might be hags the leader subjugated or, more often, the dominant hag's own daughters. A covey of night hags has the same abilities of a covey of normal hags, as noted on page 144 of the *Monster Manual*.

NIGHT HAG LAIRS

Night hags most commonly inhabit the grim plane known as the Gray Waste of Hades, but their cruel ambitions cause them to roam far. Using portals, powerful magic items, and other planar connections, night hags often travel quite extensively and know much of the planes.

Only the most powerful night hags make lairs on their native planes, using legions of lesser fiends, extraplanar horrors, and their own daughters to carve out small personal empires. Weaker hags prefer nomadic existences in such infernal realms but more often haunt wooded ruins and lonely crags near secluded towns and villages on the Material Plane. A night hag's lair often consists of two lairs, one on the Material Plane and another on the Ethereal Plane. Using their *etherealness* ability to drag materials with them from the Material Plane, they construct simplistic towers of stone and iron—grim, hard edifices among the ghostly vapors. These terrible lairs are little more than planar prisons, holding captives a night hag particularly values or protecting her uncorrupted children during their crucial transformation period. Although these lairs might leave hostages victim to unpredictable planar dangers, night hags often delight in trapping their captives in the dual prisons of their grisly lair and the ghostly Ethereal Plane.

With the ability to shift from lair to lair using her *etherealness* spell-like ability, a night hag spends much of her time on the Ethereal Plane scheming and performing all manner of foul rites. A night hag would probably lair solely on the Ethereal Plane, rendering herself nearly undetectable to most hunters, if not for that plane's numerous threats. Between sporadic ether cyclones and the countless powerful creatures that lurk in that misty realm, the Material Plane sometimes offers a safer place to store possessions and captives.

NIGHT HAGS AND LARVAE

Night hags engage in a strange connection to the rare petitioners of Hades known as larva (see page 108 of the *Manual of the Planes*). The manifested souls of unquestionably evil creatures reborn as bloated, yellow, wormlike beings, the existence of these creatures presents one of the great mysteries of the planes. With distorted faces reminiscent of those they had in life, larvae ooze a sickening, bilious fluid and constantly writhe like giant, squirming maggots. Although the specifics of their use remain vague, night hags require these abominations to reproduce. Some night hags even gather and trade larvae to other powerful evil creatures, which use them as food, currency, and as "soul stuff" for unspeakable projects.

Night hags possess an uncanny ability to determine which mortals become larva upon their deaths and perhaps even know what foul deeds a soul must commit to damn it to eternity as a larva. Knowing that these irredeemably corrupt souls hold value among the most depraved creatures of the planes, night hags often seek out powerful evil individuals, either to slay them and claim the newly spawned larva or to corrupt their immortal beings into the abominations they covet. As creatures with more Hit Dice spawn more powerful larvae, night hags are an incessant threat to powerful evil creatures, especially to spellcasters who bargain with infernal powers.

From her strategically chosen lair, a night hag ventures into the homes of her victims nightly and with ease, afflicting one creature at a time, savoring its torment as its body weakens and dies. As a night hag's dream haunting can only affect chaotic or evil creatures, a night hag often preys first upon the outcasts of a settlement. Few become concerned when the criminals and rabble-rousers of their community die in their sleep—many even consider it a blessing—until the night hag's nocturnal assaults kill a notable person or someone considered innocent. Often, a community with a night hag lairing nearby believes some kind of plague resistant to all forms of natural and magical healing afflicts them. Such a belief might even cause a country to quarantine an area, effectively dooming it to a slow death at the claws of a voracious night hag. As some of the populace sickens and dies from the hag's dream haunting, even those who suspect

an otherworldly force can rarely hope to survive a combat against a night hag.

On the rare occasions a night hag is suspected or discovered, actually finding her lair presents a formidable challenge. Night hags prefer small, secluded caves, hollows, or ruins, choosing a lair both difficult to reach and that elicits fear from those who come near. Riddling the areas near their homes with magic traps and their servants, and with no need to sleep, night hags are rarely caught unaware. Night hags take great offense to intruders and often possess a variety of unique magic traps and weapons to deal with interlopers (see *"By the Hands of Hags"* in DRAGON #300).

VS. NIGHT HAGS

When facing a night hag, be prepared to face what might be the most dangerous and unrepentantly evil threat you could ever encounter. A night hag employs every advantage she commands and gladly makes even the most dire sacrifices to save her own life. Thus, extreme caution, devotion to your cause, and the blessings of whatever gods you pray to are the only things that might see you through.

Revealing Nightmares: Beings suffering from dream haunting gradually lose Constitution and often appear physically weaker. Although many diseases cause similar effects, night hags only haunt the dreams of chaotic and evil creatures, thus spells like *detect chaos* and *detect evil* might reveal a hag's potential victims. *True seeing* most definitively reveals the presence of a dream haunting night hag, however, as she lurks on the Ethereal Plane while terrorizing her victim.

Locate the Lair: Although a night hag most likely travels ethereally, the tracks of her allies or those she's captured might offer a hint about the creature's whereabouts. Once you locate it, a night hag's lair might be guarded by almost any threat culled from the mortal world or from the outer planes. Thus, divination spells and high Listen, Spot, and Search bonuses help protect you from any manner of attack.

Prepare for Etherealness: Upon encountering a night hag, you must prepare to defend yourself from a creature capable of becoming ethereal. *Shield* spells and items like a *broach of shielding* defend against her ability to cast *magic missile* at will. *True seeing* helps immensely, both to locate the night hag on the Ethereal Plane and to detect her attempts to *polymorph* herself into another form and hide. Spells and magic items capable of ensnaring even ethereal creatures, such as *forcecage*, prove exceptionally useful.

However, the best way to face an ethereal night hag is confronting her on equal footing. This makes the ability to become ethereal, as per the *ethereal jaunt* or *etherealness* spell, exceptionally useful, although trapping a hag on the Material Plane, via *dimensional anchor* or *dimensional lock* spells or with *dimensional shackles*, could be an even more potent tactic.

The best way to deal with a night hag's *etherealness* is to take or destroy her *heartstone*. Without it a night hag loses her ability to become ethereal and bonuses to her saves.

Face Your Fears: Many novice hunters turn to the *dismissal* spell as a swift way of dispatching outsider threats—a method fraught with potential for failure when used against a night hag. The primary danger is that *dismissal* forces its target to make a Will save, which the night hag holds the highest chance of succeeding at. Also, even if the spell does work, it only returns the night hag to the Gray Wastes of Hades. Being immortal creatures with a penchant for hatred, cruelty, and revenge, a banished night hag often remembers those who slighted her and might spend the rest of eternity searching for whomever banished her to repay the slight.

Stay Grounded: Although night hags often use it to spy upon and retreat from hunters, their *etherealness* ability provides one of their most threatening attacks. Upon grappling a target, a night hag that shifts to the Ethereal Plane might trap an opponent there, potentially cutting him off from his allies. Knowing that sorcerers and wizards have the highest likelihood of detecting and harming them while ethereal, as well as having the least chance of resisting a full-on assault, night hags watch for chances to ambush and slaughter spellcasters in this manner. Protect your spellcasters from this strategy by giving them a better chance at avoiding and resisting grapple attempts. Spells such as *blur*, *bull's strength*, *displacement*, and *grease* might help. Also, keep *scrolls of ethereal jaunt* or *scrolls of etherealness* on hand to allow other characters to come to the trapped character's rescue. You might even cast *dimensional anchor* on yourself and party members if you anticipate an encounter with a night hag.

Strike While the Iron is Cold: Only magic cold iron weapons ignore a night hag's damage reduction. Consider owning such a weapon or using the *magic weapon* spell on mundane cold iron.

Protect Hostages: Night hags often hold captives on the Ethereal Plane and use them as bargaining chips to manipulate hunters or others who care about the hostage's safety. Ruthless crones, night hags brook no insolence, and they swiftly shift to the Ethereal Plane to dispatch their prisoners, often taking several captives to allow them to easily make a gory example of one or more. In such cases, your primary concern should be keeping the night hag away from her hostages. The *dimensional anchor* and *forcecage* spells again prove useful, allowing the party to combat the hag without fearing for the safety of innocents.

Beware Waking Nightmares: Night hags often enlist the aid of the fiendish steeds known as nightmares, especially prizing half-fiend cauchemars. With the aid of a creature that is both a plane-shifting mount and a powerful ally in combat, night hags gain all the benefits of mounted combat and the ability to hide not just on the Ethereal Plane, but on any plane connected to the Astral Plane. Your best hopes rely on swiftly dispatching the night hag's nightmare or casting *dimensional anchor* upon either the mount or the rider to limit their planar mobility.

Deal with the Disease: Upon dispatching a night hag, liberally applied Heal checks and *cure disease* spells ward off the effects of demon fever. You should also watch for multiple afflictions contracted from the night hag's allies or traps, as they favor poisoned and diseased guardians.

by Rich Burlew
illustrated by Mike May

THE HIDDEN BOOK

On an unremarkable shelf in the most neglected section of the least prestigious magic university in the land sits a small brown book with no distinguishing qualities whatsoever. Entitled simply *An Examination of the Effect of Atmospheric Disturbances on the Mating Habits of Aphids*, none of the many learned wizards and scholars who have searched through the library's stacks over the years have ever felt even the slightest urge to peruse it. It has thus sat untouched for decades, perhaps centuries, since its gnome author donated it to the school.

Unknown to all, however, the small book's author was not the long-forgotten sage whose name appears on the cover, but rather a powerful gnome illusionist. The gnome spent his entire professional life stretching the boundaries of what illusion magic can accomplish and recorded all of his findings in this single tome. While he gifted the university with the sum of his knowledge, his sense of humor could not resist playing a little joke on future generations. He gave his work a fake title and author, and interspersed engravings of aphids throughout the text to give anyone flipping through it the impression that the book's title was accurate. He also littered the book with *secret page* spells. Finally, he delivered his masterpiece mixed in with seven cartloads of other mundane books that he had acquired solely to camouflage his true gift. Thus, the book was added to the university's collection with no one the wiser to its true contents.

One of the gnome illusionist's most promising apprentices began searching for her master's masterpiece soon after he died. She knew he donated it to a library, but she could never find out when or to which one. Knowing her master's penchant for supporting smaller institutions of learning, she began a search for the book among all the lesser magic university libraries. Even the smallest such libraries held thousands of tomes, and she never knew which of the myriad books in the stacks belonged to her master. Her quest to locate the *Hidden Book*, as she called it, passed down to her apprentices, and then to theirs. Four generations of gnome wizards have searched for the *Hidden Book*, and none have yet found it. It has become something of a joke among gnome scholars, and many wonder if the book ever existed at all.

The book does exist, and some of its contents are described below.

CHALKBOARD

Illusion (Figment)
Level: Sor/Wiz 0
Components: S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: Figment of chalkboard up to 10 ft. by 10 ft. square
Duration: Concentration + 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will disbelief (if interacted with)
Spell Resistance: No

Favored by apprentices and young wizards just coming into their magical powers, this spell creates an intangible, opaque, floating plane with the appearance of a slate chalkboard. The chalkboard must be square, but it can be any size from 1-inch to 10-feet square. It first appears floating vertically at arm's length from you. Thereafter, as long as you continue to concentrate, you may move the image within the limits of the spell's range as a free action. You can draw on this illusory chalkboard by moving your finger as you would a piece of chalk. An illusory line of any color you choose appears as you move your hand across the plane. You can erase existing lines by wiping them out with the flat of your hand. You can create the chalkboard as either a blank plane or one covered in writing and pictures (as detailed or vague as you wish, but within the limitations of what you can create with chalk).

If you move, the illusion moves with you, always staying in the same relative orientation to you and distance from you. You can hide behind a sufficiently large chalkboard, providing you with concealment.

Material Component: A piece of colored chalk.

DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

Illusion (Phantasm) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One creature
Duration: 10 min./level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

This powerful phantasm fools the subject into believing itself more competent than it really is. The spell makes any action the target considers attempting, even the most daunting feats, seem easily accomplished requiring only a token effort. Deadly wounds seem like mere scratches, stalwart foes appear weak and intimidated, and the subject's own attacks seem stronger and more effective. As a result of its skewed perceptions, the subject suffers a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, saves, ability checks, and skill checks, as well as a

NEW SPELLS WITHIN THE HIDDEN BOOK

The *Hidden Book* contains many illusion spells from the *Player's Handbook*, as well as lengthy treatises on proper ways to use them. It is most notable, however, for the spells developed personally by the tome's author. He was a master of using illusions in unusual and unexpected ways, particularly mind-altering phantasms. The following spells represent some of his more creative experiments in his chosen field.

Assassin Spell

2nd-Level Assassin Spell
Phantom Foe: Phantasm flanks subject.

Bard Spell

2nd-Level Bard Spell
Delusions of Grandeur: Subject becomes overconfident and careless.

Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

0-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Chalkboard: Creates opaque plane you can write on.
2nd-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Delusions of Grandeur: Subject becomes overconfident and careless.
Phantom Foe: Phantasm flanks subject.
3rd-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Sensory Depravation: Subject cannot perceive world around it.
6th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
Shadowy Grappler: Shadowy force grapples subject.
Solipsism: Subject is convinced the world is fake.

-2 penalty to its Wisdom score. This penalty cannot reduce the target's Wisdom below 1. Finally, the subject becomes so completely enamored with its own (false) abilities that it cannot fight defensively or take the total defense action.

PHANTOM FOE

Illusion (Phantasm) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Assassin 2, Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: No

This spell creates in the target's mind an illusory double of whichever creature threatens it that it deems most dangerous. The form of this *phantom foe* changes as appropriate whenever the target perceives a different threatening creature as more dangerous than the last. This illusory double creates two effects.

First, the *phantom foe* flanks the target with the creature the target fears most. If that space is already occupied, the *phantom foe* occupies another flanking position or the closest available square. This ensures that while the spell lasts, the target is always flanked. Creatures immune to flanking are not subject to this aspect of the spell.

Second, the target of the spell is unable to determine where the real threat lies. Whenever the target attempts to attack the threatening creature, the target suffers a 50% miss chance. Because this miss chance comes from the target's inability to tell the *phantom foe* from the original, it is rolled separately from chances to miss due to *displacement* or concealment.

Creatures other than the target cannot see the *phantom foe*, although they can attempt to guess its location by how the target acts. If no creature threatens the target for more than 1 round, or if the *phantom foe* cannot threaten the target, the spell immediately ends.

Focus: A tiny pewter figure of a warrior that costs 10 gp.

SENSORY DEPRIVATION

Illusion (Phantasm) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

Rather than creating an illusion of something, this spell creates an illusion of absolute nothingness. The spell effect surrounds the target in a dark clinging shadow only it perceives, which blocks all auditory, olfactory, taste, and visual sensations. In addition, it blocks finely tuned senses of touch such as those that provide a creature with tremorsense. A subject that fails its save is blinded and deafened, and it gains no benefit from blindsense, blindsight, scent, or tremorsense.

The subject retains any telepathic or empathic links it might possess with other creatures while affected by the spell.

Material Component: Black silk cloth tied like a blindfold.

SHADOWY GRAPPLER

Illusion (Shadow) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: Will partial (see text)
Spell Resistance: Yes

Upon casting this spell, you create a shadowy force perceptible only to the target that automatically grabs the target (see the grappling rules on page 156 of the *Player's Handbook*). The shadowy force immediately attempts to establish a hold on the target with a grapple check bonus equal to 10 + your caster level + your bonus for the relevant spellcasting ability (Intelligence for wizards and Charisma for sorcerers). If the target succeeds at its saving throw, the creature's grapple check bonus is cut in half. For example, a 12th-level sorcerer with a 16 Charisma who casts this spell creates a *shadowy grappler* with a grapple check bonus of +25 if the target fails its save and +12 if the target makes its save.

Every round on your turn, the *shadowy grappler* makes a grapple check against the target. Once it has a hold, the shadowy force attempts to pin the target on the following round. If the imaginary grappler establishes a pin, it uses the option to prevent the target from speaking (see "If You're Pinning an Opponent" on page 156 of the *Player's Handbook*). The imaginary grappler always attempts to maintain a grapple or work toward a pin.

The imaginary grappler is always considered in the same square as the target and moves with the target for as long as the spell lasts. Other creatures cannot join the grapple, either to assist the target or the imaginary grappler.

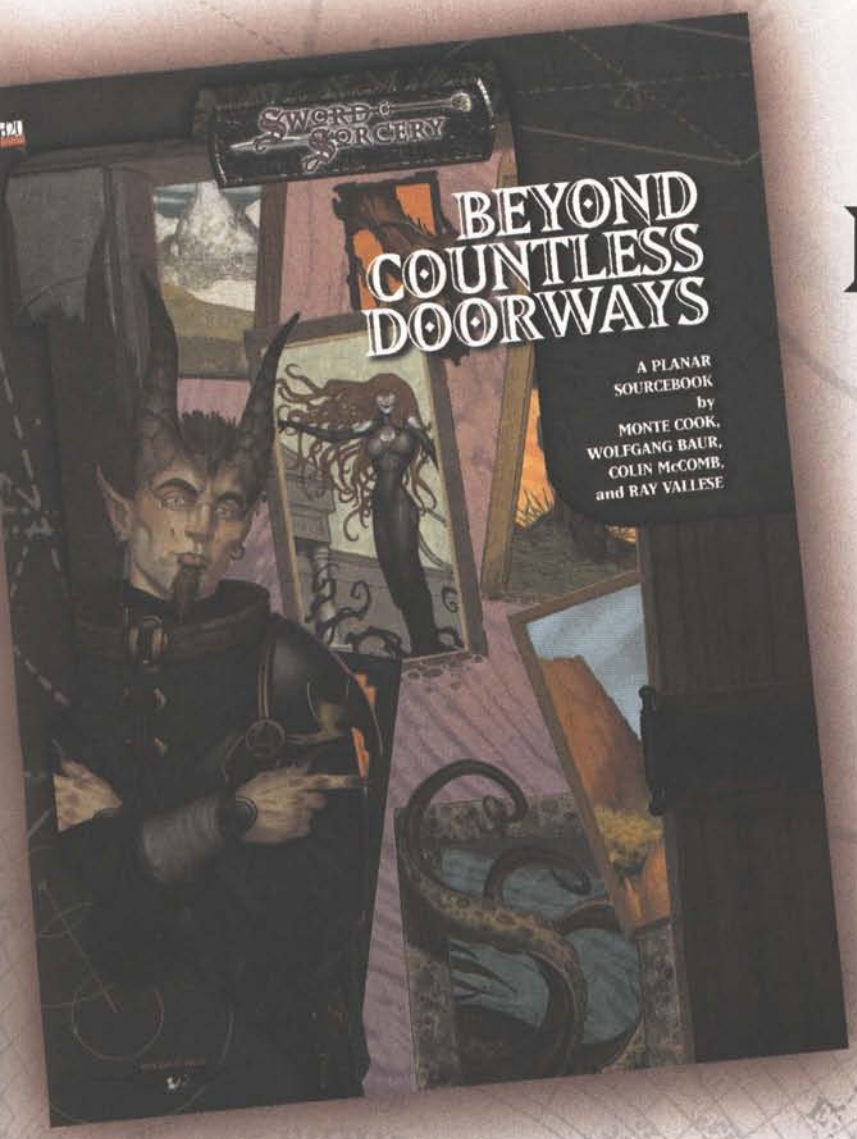
Material Component: A dried squid tentacle.

SOLIPSISM

Illusion (Phantasm) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You manipulate the senses of one creature so that it perceives itself as the only real creature in all of existence and that everything around it is merely an illusion.

If the target fails its save, it is convinced of the unreality of every situation. It takes no actions, not even purely mental actions, and instead watches the world around it with bemusement. The target becomes effectively helpless and takes no steps to defend itself from any threat, as it considers any hostile action merely another illusion.



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by Robert J. Hahn
illustrated by Eric Kim & Jim Zubkavich

POWER AT A PRICE

True power demands a price. The monk who forsakes simple comforts for martial mastery, the rogue who indulges his vices and must live a step ahead of the law, and the cleric who dedicates her existence to her god all make sacrifices for the power they desire. Magic also demands such a price for the vast power it offers, a price as considerable as the world shaping might it promises. The following magic items embody this truth, each requiring something from their users to inspire their potent magic.

HEIRONEOUS'S MERCY

The god Heironeous granted the first of these gloves to his worshipers during one of their earliest crusades. The armies' limited numbers of clerics were positioned at the forefront of their offensive, but the lack of healing magic in supporting offensives was taking its toll. Even in integral battles, severely wounded warriors died before a priest could be found. Thus, these gloves were created, granting the wearer both the power to heal and the means to send a tortured soul to Heironeous's embrace.

These pale gray gloves allow the wearer to use *deathwatch* at will and *death knell* 3 times per day. In addition, once per day, these gloves allow their wearer to transfer wounds from an injured creature to himself. The wearer must choose how many hit points of damage he wishes to absorb, up to a maximum of 20 hp, healing the touched creature by that amount and suffering the absorbed damage himself.

Faint necromancy; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *death knell, deathwatch;* Price 30,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

RING OF THE MYSTICAL ELITE

Typically created by specialist wizards who have very restricted views of magic and cast spells from a limited number of schools, these rings are most commonly granted from one member of an arcane brotherhood to a spellcaster being offered membership. These rings offer more power in a focused area, but at the cost of flexibility. Anyone discovered wearing a ring not given to them can expect severe repercussions, the least of which is loss of the ring itself.

After being worn for 24 hours, this ring grants the wearer a number of bonus spells. These bonus spells can be chosen from any spell level the caster can prepare or knows. The combined spell levels of these bonus spells equal the wearer's caster level. Thus, a 10th-level wizard could prepare a number of bonus spells whose total spell levels are equal to 10; such as two 5th level spells, or one 4th-, 3rd-, 2nd-, and 1st-level spell. These bonus spells

are prepared and cast as normal and may be used in conjunction with metamagic feats.

However, each of these rings forbids the wearer from using a particular school of magic immediately upon donning it. Roll on the following chart. If the character is already denied the school forbidden by the ring, roll again. Once the forbidden school is chosen, it does not change unless the ring is removed for 24 hours; after that time, the forbidden school is again chosen randomly when the wearer puts on the ring.

Strong universal; CL 17th; Forge Ring, *wish;* Price 306,000 gp; Weight —.

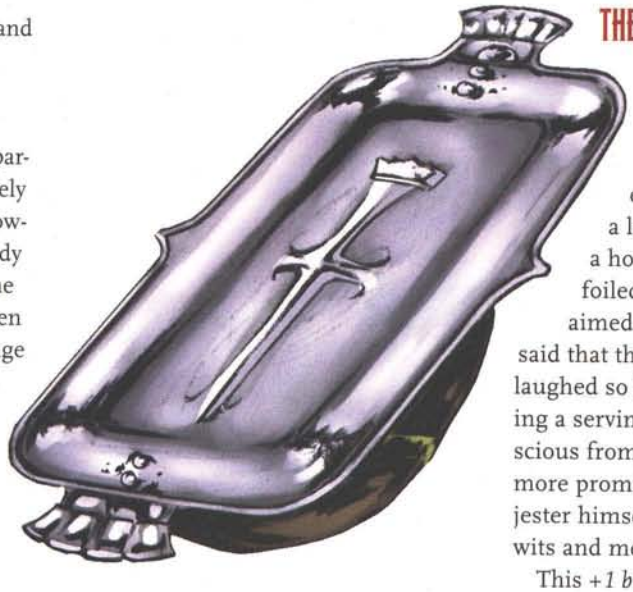
Forbidden School

d8	Result School
1	Abjuration
2	Conjuration
3	Divination
4	Enchantment
5	Evocation
6	Illusion
7	Necromancy
8	Transmutation

Lesser Ring of the Mystical Elite

This ring functions exactly as a *ring of the mystical elite* except that the combined spell levels of the bonus spells cannot exceed half the wearer's highest caster level. Thus, a 13th level sorcerer can cast a number of additional spells per day whose combined spell levels are no greater than 6. Additionally the ring only forbids spells from the forbidden school of 4th level and higher.

Strong universal; CL 13th; Forge Ring, *limited wish;* Price 182,000 gp; Weight —.



The Skin of Kaletor

Kaletor was a half-elf druid whose black bear animal companion was slain defending him from an attack. In his grief, Kaletor attempted to return his friend's spirit into its dead body, but he failed. Instead, he trapped a small part of his friend's spirit in the decomposing skin. Sensing the spirit, Kaletor tanned the bear's hide, believing that he could wear the skin as a cloak and forever have his friend beside him. While never able to communicate, he could feel the bear's strength with him whenever he wore the tattered bearskin cloak.

This bearskin cloak is shaggy and unkempt with the bear's head forming a hood. It gives off a powerful rotting stench that is immediately noticeable and incurs a –6 penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks and wild empathy checks. When wearing the *skin of Kaletor*, a druid can use the wild shape ability as if he were four levels higher than his current druid level. Additionally, any non-druid who wears the cloak can use the wild shape ability once per day as a 4th-level druid.

Faint transmutation; CL 4th; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must be a druid; Price 12,000 gp; Weight 10 lb.

The Fool's Plate

Only a fool would use a silver serving tray as a buckler, right? Temsel "Floppy Ears" Garson, eminent gnome jester of a late king, made this item a household legend when he foiled an assassination attempt aimed at his majesty. It's been said that the would-be assassin laughed so hard at the fool brandishing a serving plate that he fell unconscious from lack of breath, but the more prominent story (told by the jester himself) spins a tale of daring wits and mesmerizing magic.

This *+1 buckler* appears at first glance to be nothing more than a silver platter. When used as a buckler, its mirrored face forces anyone who attacks the wielder to make a DC 10 Will save or come under the effect of a *daze* spell. The wielder can also use the shield once per day to cast *hypnotic pattern*. Unfortunately, whenever either of these spells are invoked, the shield's user must make the same save as his target or be affected by the same effect.

Faint illusion; CL 3rd; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *daze, hypnotic pattern;* Price 7,200 gp; Weight 3 lb.

Shadahkar's Swift Wind

The druid Shadahkar imbued these sandals with the spirit of the leopard to allow her swift passage across the savannas of her homeland. Originally used by messengers to travel swiftly from village to village, they later became instrumental in her people's war against gnoll invaders,

providing a fast and reliable communications network.

These leopard-skinned sandals grant the wearer an extra 10 feet to her base movement and access to the Endurance and Run feats. However, they make the wearer jittery and generally off balance, causing a –2 penalty to Dexterity.

Faint transmutation; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *expeditious retreat;* Price 8,350 gp; Weight 1 lb.

MANTLE OF THE WINTER WITCH

Sasrasandra, a sorceress from the northern wastes, discovered this cloak buried in the treasure of a young white dragon. Its power was her first step in uniting the tribes of the frozen north, who in turn granted her the title of Winter Witch. Lost decades ago to an elven raiding party, various tribal leaders still covet its power, hoping to be the chieftain who once again reunites the tribes.

The wearer of this mottled, white-fur-trimmed cloak gains resistance to cold 10, and a +1 bonus per damage die to any spell she casts with the cold descriptor. While wearing the cloak, the wearer feels an unnatural aversion to fire, gaining vulnerability to fire. Creatures vulnerable to fire take half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire effects, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed or if an allowed save is a success or failure.

Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *cone of cold, resist energy;* Price 17,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

AGUSTINIUS'S FOLLY

Agustinius was a great general, known for his brilliant and inspiring speeches before battle. On the eve of what would have been his ultimate victory, he gallantly rode up and down the line, inspiring his troops. Yet something went wrong. His words rang hollow, and fear crept into his soldiers' souls. By the time of the enemy's advance, Agustinius's army was in full retreat, and the war was lost.

This *+2 banded mail* grants its wearer the ability to inspire courage once per day as an 8th-level bard. To activate the ability, the wearer must use a full-round action to give an inspiring speech. The ability lasts for as long as the wearer keeps speaking (which is a free action) +5 rounds. Unfortunately, the magic of this armor is unstable, and 10% of the time, the ability does not work and instead panics all affected creatures for 10 rounds.

Moderate enchantment; CL 8th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be a bard; Price 6,000 gp; Weight 35 lb.

MASK OF FURY

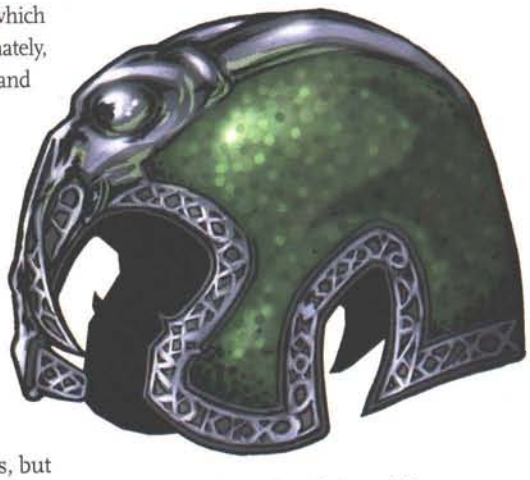
Orc priests originally created these ferocious symbols of war to aid their wandering raiders, but many have since fallen into the hands of adventurers. Orcs revere these masks with religious devotion and considerate it blasphemy to find one in the hands of a non-orc. Entire warbands of orcs swear quests to recover these masks from the hands of other races. Once recovered, cleansing the mask of the non-orc's taint entails a grisly ritual that includes bathing the mask in the blasphemer's blood.

This half mask bears the image of a predatory beast, granting the wearer the ability to rage, as the barbarian ability, twice per day. The mask can only be activated by smearing it with the wearer's own blood, an act that requires a standard action and causes 3 points of damage if the wearer has not suffered damage in the last hour. However, if the wearer has been wounded within the last hour, activating this item is a free action that requires no further blood loss.

Faint enchantment; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *rage;* Price 12,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

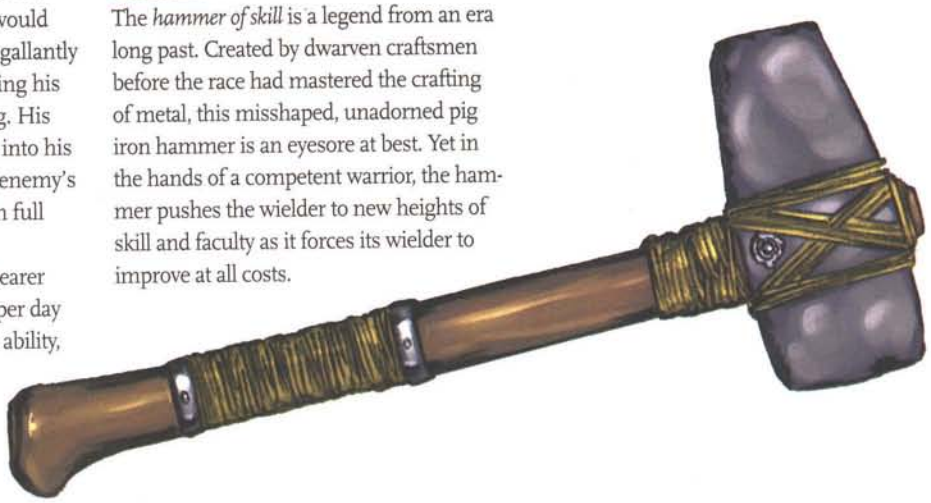
HAMMER OF SKILL

The *hammer of skill* is a legend from an era long past. Created by dwarven craftsmen before the race had mastered the crafting of metal, this misshaped, unadorned pig iron hammer is an eyesore at best. Yet in the hands of a competent warrior, the hammer pushes the wielder to new heights of skill and faculty as it forces its wielder to improve at all costs.



This crude *+2 thundering cold iron warhammer* has been wielded for centuries by both master and amateurs alike. This long service has granted it a kind of semi-intelligence. The warhammer expects competency from its wielder and punishes those who fail to use it properly. When a wielder fails an attack roll, the warhammer bestows a cumulative –1 penalty on its next attack roll. Should the wielder fail ten consecutive attack rolls, the warhammer abandons the wielder permanently. Henceforth, should the failed wielder attempt to use the warhammer, it becomes too awkward to wield. Conversely, the warhammer garners a cumulative +1 circumstance bonus per failed attack roll to the warhammer's next damage roll. The warhammer resets for each new wielder but remembers a past wielder's performance indefinitely.

Moderate necromancy; CL 6th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *blindness/deafness;* Price 18,000 gp; Weight 5 lb.



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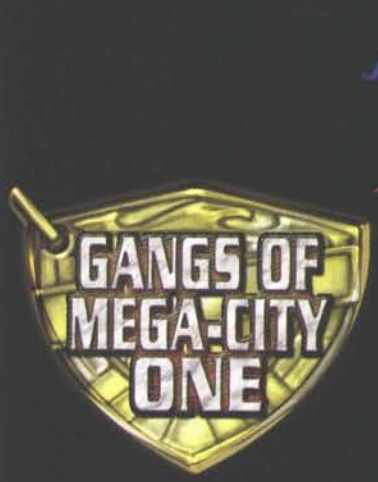

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by Nick Simmonds

RACIAL FEATS

Beings of the same race have a bewildering variety of body types, appearances, and abilities. Most of these variations fit within the D&D definition of that being's race, but some are well outside the standard. How can you, as a player, account for the vast differences among members of your character's race?

Racial feats.

Racial feats alter a character's racial characteristics. They create a creature different from others of her kind. They alter racial bonuses and penalties, or create them where they do not exist. In many cases, they make deeper changes to your character as well.

A character may only have one racial feat, and it must be selected at 1st level. Fighters cannot use their fighter bonus feat at 1st level to gain a racial feat.

HUMAN BLOOD [RACIAL]

Your humanity dominates your ancestry.

Prerequisites: Partial human ancestry (such as half-elf or half-orc), must be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain +1 skill point at 1st level and every level thereafter. For all effects relating to race, you are considered a human.

INNATE MAGIC [RACIAL]

You can cast a minor spell.

Prerequisites: Int 3, Cha 11, must be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: Select a 0-level spell. You gain the spell-like ability to cast this spell once per day. Caster level 1st; save DC 10 + Cha modifier.

SLENDER [RACIAL]

You are slim for your race.

Prerequisite: Must be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain a +1 racial bonus on Disable Device, Escape Artist, Move Silently, and Tumble checks. Decrease your weight by 10%.

SLOW MATURATION [RACIAL]

Your body ages slower and you retain your youthful outlook on life longer than others of your race.

Prerequisites: Must be taken at 1st level, must be younger than middle age.

Benefit: It takes you 50% longer than normal for your race to reach the next age category.

STOCKY [RACIAL]

You have a thicker, stouter body than normal for your race.

Prerequisite: Must be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on ability checks made to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground. This bonus stacks with dwarven stability. Increase your weight by 10%.

SUPERIOR HEARING [RACIAL]

You can discern even the finest differences in sounds, giving you an exacting ear.

Prerequisite: Must be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on Listen checks and on Perform (keyboard instruments), Perform (percussion instruments), Perform (string instruments), Perform (wind instruments), and Perform (sing) checks.

SUPERIOR SENSE OF SMELL [RACIAL]

Your sensitive nose can detect even the most minute oders.

Prerequisite: Must be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on Craft (alchemy) and Heal checks, and a +2 bonus on Survival checks.

SUPERIOR TASTE [RACIAL]

You have a heightened sense of taste.

Prerequisite: Must be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus on Spellcraft checks made to identify a potion and a +3 bonus on Fortitude saves to resist the effects of an ingested poison.

SUPERIOR TOUCH [RACIAL]

You feel every imperfection in even the smoothest texture, and your skin senses the slightest vibration.

Prerequisite: Must be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on Disable Device, Open Lock, and Sleight of Hand checks. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on Spot checks made to pinpoint the location of an invisible creature.

SUPERIOR VISION [RACIAL]

Your eyesight is truly extraordinary.

Prerequisite: Must be taken at 1st level.

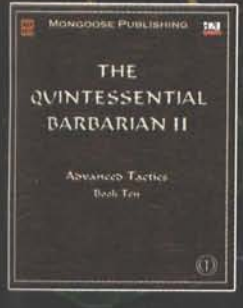
Benefit: You gain low-light vision. If you already have low-light vision, you can now see three times as far as a human in conditions of poor illumination.

Normal: A character with low-light vision can see twice as far as a human in conditions of poor illumination.

Beware of the Law!

Gangs of Mega-City One is the hit new miniatures game based on the ever popular science fiction Judge Dredd comic strip of 2000AD. Players design and build their own street gang, and stand ready to fight it out with their rivals in an effort to grab valuable turf and gangland territory on the streets of Mega-City One. However, the Judges are always present and one wrong turn could see a gang fighting off an entire judicial patrol!

The Gangs of Mega-City One box set contains all you need to wage sci-fi street gang war in the future. As well as a highly attractive 96 page rulebook, within the box you will also find a complete set of 30mm scale multi-pose plastic gang members, reference cards, easy-to-construct card terrain and dice. In fact, everything you need to begin playing!



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THE SWORN SLAYER

In a world where combat prowess and oaths of loyalty are the measure of many heroes, the sworn slayer stands out as an unstoppable engine of vengeance and destruction—a dedicated hunter of the world's most feared and fearsome creatures. Choosing to foreswear all other mortal motivations, a sworn slayer pledges a lifelong oath of enmity against a specific kind of creature. He follows a path that can lead as easily to an outcast's life on the fringes of society as it can to a hero's legacy, standing tall in society's defense.

From the jaded undead hunter bearing his many hunts' scars—of both body and soul—to the easygoing giant hunter full of youth and hubris, the sworn slayer class accepts any who wish to protect the helpless masses. No organization or brotherhood links sworn slayers, and many prefer working alone or with companions who aren't sworn slayers themselves. Competitions between sworn slayers oathbound to destroy the same kind of creature rarely result in friendly rivalries; the unquenchable need of sworn slayers to bring ruin upon the creatures they hate sometimes make them oppose each other as much as those they truly seek to destroy. Sworn slayers whisper stories of sabotaged ambushes and capture at the hands of those who fight the same creatures they do. A sworn slayer never takes apprentices and never teaches others his secrets; he learns his techniques the hard way. Times are changing among the sworn slayers, though, and newer members of the class band together in order to bring down bigger, tougher foes.

Sworn slayers come from those who have suffered a great loss at the hands of the creatures they seek to destroy. This vengeful aspect of the sworn slayer comes from the death of a loved one or the utter destruction of the sworn slayer's home. Clerics, monks, and paladins might come to the class after witnessing the destruction of their monastery or temple. A druid or ranger might swear an oath to annihilate a race of monsters that ravaged his beloved forest, grove, or oasis. The loss need not result in death or poverty, but it must be severe and its effects long felt.

Although their origins are as varied as the creatures they pledge their lives to destroy, all sworn slayers share one trait: a willingness to abandon all other precepts, callings, and pursuits in the name of retribution. With a lifestyle devoted to the destruction of perilous foes, the warrior classes tend to fill the ranks of the sworn slayers, as they most easily achieve its requirements.

Rangers and paladins find the sworn slayer's single-minded purpose a natural extension of their own dedication and moral duty. Fighters also excel as sworn slayers, finding a focus for the full destructive capability of their combat ability. Since a ranger's favored enemy bonuses provide a solid foundation on which to strengthen the sworn slayer's own abilities, characters driven to seek the path of the sworn slayer often take levels of ranger (with an appropriate favored enemy). Paladin sworn slayers typically choose those monster kinds devoted to evil or that oppose the tenets of their faith: intelligent undead, demons, and devils. To make use of their inherent ability to detect the presence of evil, such sworn slayers almost never choose creatures that typically have a neutral alignment.

Members of other classes sometimes become sworn slayers, as the trials and risks of an adventurer's life make it all too easy for any character to find himself consumed by the hatred that fuels the sworn slayer's oath. The special abilities of rogues, monks, and clerics make them formidable sworn slayers against certain creature types, although clerics and monks sometimes find it difficult to balance the dedication of their original calling with the focus required to follow the path of the sworn slayer. Wizards and sorcerers can make devastating

REQUIREMENTS

HIT DICE D10

To qualify to become a sworn slayer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Skills: Knowledge (appropriate to creature type) 4 ranks, Sense Motive 4 ranks.

Special: Must swear a vow to destroy all creatures of a chosen kind. This vow must be in response to the character suffering a great loss at the claws of the chosen creature kind. A great loss might include the death of a loved one, the loss of all material wealth, the destruction of a prized family heirloom, or something similar.

The Knowledge skill requirement of a character who wishes to become a sworn slayer depends upon the creature type that he wishes to slay (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 78). For example, a character who wishes to slay beholders must have at least 4 ranks in Knowledge (dungeoneering), which covers knowledge pertaining to aberrations.

CLASS SKILLS

The sworn slayer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (appropriate to creature type) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

THE SWORN SLAYER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Sworn foe +1
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Animosity +3, determination +2
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Nemesis, sworn foe +2
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Animosity +5, determination +4
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Sworn foe +3, slayer attack

representatives of the class, their arcane strength acting as a potent weapon in a sworn slayer's dedicated hands.

NPC sworn slayers might appear in virtually any setting and situation and are as often found in isolation (such as the solitary renegade slaying aberrations in desolate ruins) as in the thick of civilization (such as troops of wererat-hunting sworn slayers heroically defending the sewers of massive cities).

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the sworn slayer prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Sworn slayers are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all armor, and with shields (except tower shields).

Sworn Foe (Ex): At 1st level, the sworn slayer dedicates his life to the destruction of creatures of a specific type, gaining a specialized bonus against those creatures. The sworn slayer chooses a monster type (such as aberration, humanoid, or undead). Against creatures of his chosen type, he gains a +1 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Move Silently, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks, as well as weapon damage rolls. This bonus stacks with those from a ranger's favored enemy ability.

This bonus increases to +2 at 3rd level and to +3 at 5th level.

Animosity (Su): At 2nd level, the sworn slayer can choose to focus his anger and hatred on a particular kind of creature. The sworn slayer chooses a specific monster kind from among those of his sworn foe type. For example, if a sworn slayer chose undead as his sworn foe type, he might choose lich, mummy, or vampire (or any other creature with the undead type) as the target of his animosity. Against this specific kind of creature, the sworn slayer gains an additional +3 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Move Silently, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks. He also gains an additional +3 bonus on weapon damage rolls. This bonus stacks with the bonus from his sworn foe ability as well as any favored enemy bonuses from ranger levels.

At 4th level, this bonus increases to +5.

Determination (Ex): Also at 2nd level, the sworn slayer gains a +2 bonus on all saving throws against the special attacks, spells, and spell-like abilities of creatures of his sworn foe type.

At 4th level, this bonus increases to +4.

Nemesis (Su): At 3rd level, the sworn slayer gains the Nemesis feat (see sidebar) even if he does not meet all of its prerequisites. The sworn slayer senses his sworn foe rather than a favored enemy.

Slayer Attack (Su): At 5th level, the sworn slayer gains the ability to study a particular creature of his sworn foe's kind in order to kill or destroy it with a single attack. If the sworn slayer studies his foe for 3 rounds and then makes a single attack with a melee weapon or a ranged weapon within 30 feet that successfully deals damage, the attack has the additional effect of possibly killing (if alive) or destroying (if a construct or undead) the target. While studying his foe, the sworn slayer can undertake other actions so long as his attention stays focused on the target and the target does not detect the sworn slayer or recognize him as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the sworn slayer's class level + the sworn slayer's Int modifier) against the slayer attack, it dies (if alive) or is destroyed (if a construct or undead). If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal attack. Once the sworn slayer has completed the 3 rounds of study, he must make the slayer attack within next 3 rounds. If the sworn slayer attempts a slayer attack and it fails (the victim makes its save) or if the sworn slayer does not launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing the study, 3 new rounds of study are required before he can attempt another slayer attack.

EXALTED FEATS

Exalted feats as presented in the *Book of Exalted Deeds* have the prerequisite that "only intelligent creatures of good alignment and the highest moral standards can acquire exalted feats, and only as a gift from powerful agents of good." All exalted feats are supernatural. A character with at least one exalted feat radiates an aura of good with a power equal to his character level.

Nemesis [Exalted]

You are the holy bane of creatures of a particular type.

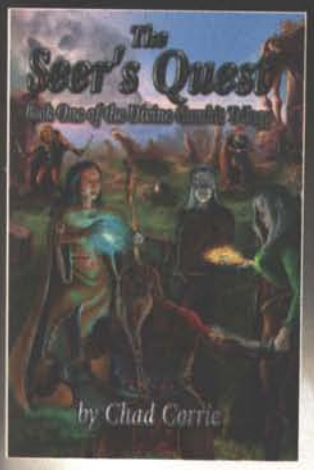
Prerequisite: Favored enemy class ability.

Benefit: Choose one of your favored enemies. You can sense the presence of creatures of this type within 60 feet, as well as pinpoint their exact location (distance and direction) relative to you. Normal barriers and obstructions do not block this supernatural ability, allowing you to sense the presence and location of creatures behind doors or walls, for example. This ability does not allow you to see an invisible or hidden creature (although you can still discern its location).

In addition to sensing the presence of your favored enemy, you deal +1d6 points of damage on weapon attack rolls made against evil representatives of the favored enemy creature type.

Special: You can choose this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you select this feat, it applies to a different favored enemy.

For neutral or evil sworn slayers, the granted bonus feat loses its exalted feat status and becomes a regular feat. Nongood sworn slayers do not radiate an aura of good.



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GRIPPLI

Grippli resemble small, intelligent, humanoid tree frogs. Primitive and largely peaceful, grippli lead a simple existence. Living off the bounty of the swamps and rainforests they inhabit, they spend their days hunting insects and gathering fruit. Warlike races that neighbor grippli settlements soon learn to avoid them as, although they rarely attack anything but insects, the grippli prove effective and mobile defenders of their homes and keep few possessions worth the risk of pillaging.

Grippli live in isolated family groups, clustered into loose villages led by an elder priestess known as the tribe mother. These families tend to be small, as the long-lived grippli produce few offspring. Grippli devoutly follow the decisions of the tribe mother. In theory, this elder priestess holds divinely granted power over her village. In practice, she rarely exerts that power, leaving the day-to-day leadership of the tribe to its most experienced hunters, often elder males. Grippli tribes require little governance in any case, each family making most of its own decisions, barring religious matters and a village-wide crisis or dispute.

Few grippli apply themselves as craftsmen or artisans. Simple wood, stone, and vine creations make up the majority of the weapons grippli use in hunting and defense, while they pass rare metal weapons and tools down through the generations as treasured heirlooms. Grippli rarely fashion even the simplest trade goods and more rarely do their spellcasters craft complex magic items, although potions, alchemical creations, and herbal tinctures are quite common.

Unscrupulous traders sometimes take advantage of the grippli, selling them worthless baubles in return for rare and valuable herbs, unguents, and extracts from the deep jungle. The grippli don't see themselves as getting taken advantage of, though. They understand the value outsiders place on their purchases, but they in turn prize brightly colored curios. Polished quartz, vibrantly dyed cloths, colored glass, and eclectic collections of foreign signs brighten the majority of grippli homes.

Besides the rare trader, the grippli deal only with the insects they hunt and the giant snakes and spiders that hunt them. Such giants seem to favor the taste of grippli flesh and frequently attack grippli communities. Lizardfolk and kuo-toa also sometimes hunt grippli, although both races have strict taboos against eating the smaller humanoids' flesh. The enmity between these races seems to date to their distant pasts, perhaps even to some conflict between their gods.

The origins and history of the grippli are shrouded in mystery, even to themselves. As grippli do not keep records, except for those relevant to their worship, their past remains a subject of conjecture and guesswork. The prevailing theory holds that grippli exist now much as always, a humble race of peaceful recluses content with what the land provides and the world they know. This surprising peacefulness seems to stem from their simple faith in their nameless froglike goddess. With the land providing them all they need and a faith to further content their modest lives, the grippli have had little need to change over the centuries.

Personality: In the presence of strangers, grippli become noticeably skittish. They usually climb the nearest tree and hide upon spotting other humanoids or any other creature

deemed dangerous. Among their own kind or those they accept as friends, grippli show their true character. Light-hearted and cheerful, they value familial bonds and the simple pleasures of food, games, rest, and shiny objects from the outside world. Other humanoids sometimes perceive relaxed grippli as blasé, even lazy, but a relaxed grippli might snap to full alertness at a moment's notice.

Although reluctant warriors, grippli are far from cowardly or inept in combat. When forced to fight, they do so cunningly and viciously, leaving surviving assailants with no doubt about the danger of attacking again. Thus, tales of grippli fighting ability keeps them safe from most of their enemies, as the latter consider an assault upon the grippli's secluded homes not worth the risk, assuming they can find the grippli in the first place.

Physical Description: A typical grippli stands 2 to 2-1/2 feet tall and weighs approximately 30 lbs, although the very old and particularly powerful hunters might stand and weigh twice that. A grippli's head and body appear similar to those of a giant frog, but its hands and feet look humanlike. Grippli skin color varies dramatically depending on their environment, ranging from the brown-splotched green of swamp grippli to vibrant blues, yellows, and reds of rainforest-dwelling tribes. Grippli rarely wear clothing, although they often decorate themselves with jewelry and trinkets that members of most other races consider gaudy.

Grippli reach adulthood at 30 years and live to around 180 years old, while females live slightly longer on average than males. A female grippli gives birth at most six times in her life, becoming fertile at roughly 25-year-intervals after she reaches maturity.

Relations: Grippli rarely interact with outsiders, as they live in the deepest regions of the wilds. If they have any outside interaction, it is with individuals of other races, and almost never on the level of a societal alliance. They sometimes abandon their villages if other races begin settling too close.

When a grippli village does make contact with other races, wild elves or fey often serve as intermediaries, as their strong connection to nature makes the grippli more comfortable around them. However, a grippli's purpose for contacting the outside world rarely has anything to do with nature, as they enjoy strange inventions, masterwork items, and other colorful and shiny objects. As such, grippli sometimes entreat their allies to seek out colonies of gnomes to trade with.

Grippli find dwarves and humans intimidating, too rarely encounter halflings to form an opinion, and deeply fear anything that smells of orc, half-orcs included. They similarly fear giants and savage humanoids, particularly those who share their habitat.

Grippli Lands: Grippli inhabit deep marshes and remote rainforests, both since these areas hold the giant insects they prey upon and keep them well secluded. They construct small villages either on the ground or in the branches of large trees. Occasionally, a grippli colony might take up residence in the branches of an especially large treant or make a floating community among a marsh's dense river vegetation.

Grippli villages consist of simple huts made from branches or reeds. Most bear decorations, usually shiny

objects, simple religious totems, and woven flowering vines. Because the grippli share their environs with many larger, more dangerous creatures, their villages tend to be spread out and semi-nomadic. If one area suffers an attack, all the grippli in the village take to the trees and flee from branch to branch, leaving their few valuables behind. Only when the entire tribe is safely hidden do grippli warriors return to their village to combat their attackers.

Hunting parties of grippli frequently roam the lands near their homes, although their elusive nature and habit of traveling through the trees makes them difficult to spot or track. These hunts serve the dual purposes of scouting the land for signs of intruders and bringing back the massive insects grippli eat or offer to their goddess. Swift, organized, and quick to retreat when outmatched, grippli hunting parties rarely come to harm or even conflict in the deadliest parts of their tangled homes.

Powerful predators, especially green dragons, sometimes enslave whole tribes of grippli. Such grippli usually accept their fate, as their master's protection provides a more formidable defense than any they could maintain. Only when shackled by an especially cruel overlord do grippli make any attempt to overthrow the creature or escape its domination.

Alignment: Their ties to nature and xenophobic tendencies cause grippli to tend toward neutral alignments. Predisposed to simple, relaxed lives with friends and family, the best grippli seem generous and helpful, while the worst merely seem indifferent. Thus, if a grippli deviates from a purely neutral alignment, it's usually in favor of good, and only after the most tragic incidents toward evil.

Religion: Grippli hold strong religious beliefs, although they rarely explain their faith to outsiders. Their chief deity is a nameless goddess, depicted in sculptures of wood and stone as a bulbous frog with vibrant rainbow skin. Most outsiders believe this amphibian deity to be nothing more than some strange, primordial forest spirit, but grippli revere her as the center of their religious lives.

More often druids than clerics, females almost exclusively comprise the grippli clergy. Led by a community's tribe mother, these priestesses make most of the decisions and solve the disputes of the tribe, although they defer to the tribe mother in all matters. Like a stern grandmother, the tribe mother holds absolute authority over the community and speaks as the voice of the goddess herself. Although she always keeps the best intentions of her people in mind, the tribe mother holds many secrets of her people's faith, which she reveals only to her protégé and only when the time of her death nears. The few grippli clerics that exist most often serve abstract natural powers rather than the grippli goddess.

Grippli accord seasonal and celestial events great religious significance and mark them with elaborate religious celebrations that all tribe members participate in. These frequent festivals and general racial levity make it seem that grippli celebrate frivolously, but they truly consider each event worth commemorating. These festivals always culminate in large ceremonies and offerings to the grippli goddess. To outsiders, these ceremonies seem unusually extravagant as mountains of insect flesh, often enough to feed an entire grippli community for a season, are mixed with a strange pulpy paste and burnt as massive offerings. Although no visitor, and perhaps no grippli but the tribe mother, knows what this holy unguent consists of, preparations of all offerings include liberal treatment with this mixture.

Grippli don't keep their ritual celebrations secret from other races—indeed, the arrival of fey visitors ranks high among their reasons to celebrate. Unfortunately, most outsiders cannot physically participate in these revels, which consist primarily of climbing, swimming, and tree-hopping competitions and amphibian-voiced songs.

In a dark undertone to peaceful grippli life, some sages postulate that the grippli's nameless goddess might disguise an ancient aspect of Blibdoolpoolp, goddess of the kuo-toa. If so, the aspect venerated by the grippli presents itself as a far more peaceful one, although there might lurk some more sinister aspect to their worship than the grippli allow outsiders to witness. Spider and snake creatures round out the grippli religion as demons and evil spirits. The few grippli who know of the deities of other races consider the spidery drow goddess Lolth the chief enemy of their people, but she and her followers pay the grippli little, if any, heed. Each grippli village also venerates legendary hunters and priestesses, but none of these mythic figures transcend the boundaries of individual tribes.

Language: Throaty and guttural, grippli language consists of a wide range of croaks and rumbling words, all of which sound roughly the same to other humanoids. Although other races might learn the grippli language, they cannot truly master it without the aid of magic. The common grippli knows no written language, although the priestesses of a community know and read Undercommon. Writing, however, is strictly taboo and only the tribe mother may create any record.

Names: Grippli receive no surnames, although those who travel extensively often pick up nicknames from other races. These nicknames sometimes reflect an individual grippli's abilities or personality. More often than not, these nicknames reflect the other humanoids' notions of grippli as sharing traits with non-humanoid amphibians. Grippli do not place much importance on names, as they identify each other more by sight than by words. Many struggle to remember the names of non-grippli but have no trouble differentiating between individuals by other means.

Male Names: Brillup, Bullgup, Chirk, Labllup, Quortle, Rublup, Willup.

Female Names: Bellum, Kaillum, Que, Quon, Ruue, Toum, Wuon.

Nicknames: Buldgeeye, Deepcroak, Duskskipper, Ponddiver, Tonguesticker, Treeskipper, Widefingers.

Adventurers: Survivors of devastated grippli villages most often become adventurers. Having lost their original tribes, they wander to find new meaning and are forced to overcome their fears of the outside world. Other grippli rarely take to life on the road. Those who do earn their keep with their agility, climbing ability, wilderness expertise, and in some cases, with their willingness to accept payment that other adventurers would consider beneath notice.

Occasionally, a young grippli might become taken with the shiny baubles of the outside world and go adventuring in search of more. If he survives, such a grippli usually retires to his village at a relatively young age, as he is motivated more by wanderlust and curiosity than by greed.

GRIPPLI RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dexterity, –2 Strength: Grippli are nimble and quick, but slight. Well adjusted to darting through trees and lurking in the underbrush, grippli avoid direct confrontation and exertion.
- Small: As a Small creature, a grippli gains a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks, but he uses smaller weapons than humans use, and his lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium character.
- Grippli base land speed is 20 feet.
- Grippli have a climb speed of 20 feet granting them the usual +8 racial bonus on Climb checks.
- Low-Light Vision: A grippli can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Weapon Familiarity: Grippli treat bolas and nets as martial weapons rather than exotic weapons.
- +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against vermin: Grippli are trained to hunt insects of all sizes as they are their food of choice.
- +4 dodge bonus to Armor Class against monsters of the animal and vermin types: This bonus represents special training grippli undergo while on the hunt, learning techniques that allow them to avoid the attacks of a variety of natural predators. Any time a creature loses its Dexterity bonus (if any) to Armor Class, such as when it's caught flat-footed, it loses its dodge bonus, too. The *Monster Manual* has information on which creatures are of the animal and vermin types.
- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against poison: Although not themselves poisonous, grippli have a high resistance against toxins.
- +4 racial bonus on Jump checks: Grippli are natural leapers, often jumping from tree to tree. In addition, grippli treat all Jump checks as though they have a running start.
- +2 racial bonus on Move Silently checks: Grippli are taught from a young age how to slink through their verdant homes and avoid detection by predators.
- Illiterate: Grippli, even wizards, cannot read or write without devoting skill points to languages. A grippli of any class can learn to read and write one of his starting languages by devoting a single skill point to it. Otherwise grippli gain the use of languages—speaking, reading, and writing—as normal for their class.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Grippli. Bonus Languages: Aquan, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Sylvan, and Undercommon. Grippli often learn the languages of the few races they comfortably deal with.
- Favored Class: Ranger. A multiclass grippli's ranger class does not count when determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty.

GRIPPLI, BELIEVE IT OR NOT

The first grippli appeared in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS twenty-one years ago on the third page of the *Monster Manual II*, roasting a marshmallow over a magman's head. Debuting along with other new monsters such as aboleths, modrons, and the tarrasque, the original grippli benefited from a host of psionic abilities. Making later appearances in the *Monstrous Compendium Greyhawk Adventures Appendix*, the *Mystara Monstrous Appendix*, and the second edition *Monstrous Manual*, these more recent descriptions removed their predecessor's host of psionic powers. Although most grippli have long since lost these abilities, members of rare and especially secluded grippli communities might still posses such powers. However, these throwbacks rely upon their psionic powers far more than their physical hunting skills, and thus let such physical talents atrophy. If you wish to present grippli as an innately psionic race, they lose their +1 bonus on attack rolls against vermin. Replace this ability with the Wild Talent feat from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

GRIPPLI VITAL STATISTICS

Random Starting Ages

Adulthood	Barbarian Rogue Sorcerer	Bard Fighter Paladin Ranger	Cleric Druid Monk Wizard
30 years	+2d6	+4d6	+6d6

Aging Effects

Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
70 years	105 years	140 years	+4d20 years

Random Height and Weight

Gender	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Male	1'10"	+2d4	20 lb.	x1 lb.
Female	1'7"	+2d6	15 lb.	x1 lb.

by Mike McArtor

FROM BATTLEGROUND TO BACKGROUND

FIGHTER

Many players like to give their characters back stories—histories of what happened in their characters' lives before the start of the campaign. Yet, some players find it difficult to create a character background, while others might just need a couple more events to round out an otherwise thorough history when writer's block hits.

The suggestions that follow might help you create a more exciting character history. While designed for fighters, some of these options could just as easily be used by characters of other classes. Note that every event has a small benefit attached to it that your DM might permit. If none of these ideas suit your character or specific campaign, feel free to alter them and apply comparable benefits if allowed.

BATTLE OF A THOUSAND BANNERS

Witness to the massive, multi-army conflict later called the Battle of a Thousand Banners, you discovered at a young age a love for the intricacies of heraldry. Virtually every known lord had a representative standard that day, making the battlefield come alive with vibrant colors. While too young to participate in the fighting, you stayed just behind the front lines in order to collect the banners of fallen lords.

Suggested Benefit: As a result of the sheer number of banners you saw and collected, you now receive a +1 bonus on all Knowledge (nobility and royalty) checks.

GNOLL BASHING

During the great hunting expedition meant to clear gnolls from the king's forests, you worked as a page to a great knight. The knight slew many gnolls and taught you about their habits, anatomy, and culture before the great campaign wound down.

Suggested Benefit: As a result of months of careful tutoring concerning the behavior of gnolls and other humanoids, you now receive a +1 bonus on Knowledge (local) checks made concerning humanoids.

HILLOCK CHARGE

You were present for the decisive charge one phalanx of your army made against a heavily defended hillock. Most of your fellow soldiers attempting to ascend the hill were slaughtered and served no greater purpose than to make the ground more treacherous for their comrades. At the end of the day, however, your army controlled the hillock, and your phalanx was pressed into service to bury the rotting corpses.

Suggested Benefit: As a result of your long-term exposure to dead bodies, you now receive a +1 bonus on Fortitude saves made to resist contracting the diseases filth fever and red ache.

LAST STAND ON BEACON HILL

When the last great incursion of orcs threatened the peaceful lands near your home, you helped protect a watchtower on a small rise. For five days and four nights, with barely anything to eat, you and a small group of fellow soldiers held the tower against the orc threat before reinforcements arrived to drive them off.

Suggested Benefit: Your time in the Beacon Hill watchtower showed you that you could survive relatively long periods of time without proper water or food, granting you a +1 bonus on Constitution checks made to stave off the effects of starvation and thirst.

THE QUEEN'S MURDERER

When the last queen died at the hand of her king's mistress, you worked as a guard in the king's stables. The mistress fled the palace, one step ahead of her pursuers, and found you in the stables guarding the king's many horses. In a hurry but reluctant to say why, the mistress attempted to distract you as she pulled her dagger. Not fooled by her lies, you caught her wrist and disarmed her.

Suggested Benefit: Your encounter with the lying mistress taught you to be wary of a foe in combat, granting you a +1 bonus on any Sense Motive check made to counter a feint.

by Mike McArtor

PEACE OUT

CLERIC

Of all the core classes, clerics lose the least by taking on the mantle of pacifism. A pacifist cleric can use all of his normal cleric abilities without limitation or modification, although he must carefully choose his domains and spells. He can wear the heaviest armor, turn undead, use domain abilities, and cast the majority of his spells; the only class ability not frequently utilized by a pacifist cleric is the cleric's proficiency with simple weapons. Every other class loses more of its functionality and appeal by taking up the life of a pacifist.

Depending on the campaign, playing a pacifist cleric might prove quite challenging. In campaigns where combat dominates every session, the player who willingly takes on roleplaying a pacifist cleric faces the very real possibility of boredom. The *Book of Exalted Deeds* provides rules, in the form of exalted feats, that grant game-mechanic bonuses to characters who eschew the way of violence. Vow of Nonviolence increases saving throw DCs for spells that deal no damage (spells that deal nonlethal damage also fall under this feat's benefit). Vow of Peace surrounds the character with an aura of peace and grants him a deflection bonus to AC. The benefits of these feats disappear (and the feats become wasted) if the character harms a living creature in any way (except nonlethal damage).

As the cleric class's most recognizable form of customization, domains remain the easiest way to show that the cleric practices the path of peace. Certain domains lend themselves to a peaceful way of life, as their granted powers and domain spell lists have no damaging effects: Animal, Healing, Knowledge, Luck, Magic, Protection, Travel, and Trickery. Other domains have granted powers that can harm or destroy certain types of creatures, or have one or two damaging spells on their domain lists: Air, Earth, Fire, Plant, and Water.

Pacifist clerics lose the use of only a handful of spells. The more extreme the pacifist's views, though, the more spells he must give up. Some cleric spells the pacifist should avoid directly deal damage, while others only aid the cleric's attack and damage rolls. The accompanying table shows the spells that a cleric truly devoted to the path of peace should not cast.

WHAT IS PACIFISM?

In the strictest definition, pacifism means opposition to war and violence. In D&D, a character who refuses to ever make an attack roll or cast a spell that causes direct damage (whether normal or nonlethal damage, ability score damage, or bestowing negative levels) practices the strictest definition of pacifism. Other forms of pacifism exist, such as not attacking living creatures, attacking only to subdue (by only dealing nonlethal damage), or in the most extreme form, attempting to stop allies from attacking to kill as well.

NON-PACIFIST SPELLS

Level	Spell
0	*Inflict minor wounds*
1st	*Divine favor, inflict light wounds, magic stone, summon monster I**
2nd	*Death knell, inflict moderate wounds, summon monster II**
3rd	*Bestow curse***, blindness/deafness***, glyph of warding**, inflict serious wounds, searing light, summon monster III**
4th	*Divine power, inflict critical wounds, poison, summon monster IV**
5th	*Flame strike; inflict light wounds, mass; insect plague**; righteous might; slay living; summon monster V**
6th	*Blade barrier**; glyph of warding, greater; harm; inflict moderate wounds, mass; summon monster VI**
7th	*Blasphemy; destruction; dictum; holy word; inflict serious wounds, mass; summon monster VII**; word of chaos*
8th	*Fire storm; inflict critical wounds, mass; summon monster VIII**; symbol of death**; symbol of insanity***
9th	*Energy drain, implosion, storm of vengeance, summon monster IX**

*These spells deal damage indirectly, by summoning or creating creatures or spell effects for the cleric. The various summon monster spells can provide other uses, but for the most part, the strict definition of pacifism disallows these spells.

**These spells cause harm not measured by hit points.

by Paul Leach

OPTIONAL CLASS: FILIDH

WIZARD

Highly respected lawgivers of barbarian society, filidhs draw their power from their knowledge and application of lore. They provide judgments in legal disputes and defend their people using the mysterious ways of their ancestors. If shamans are the conscience of the tribe and skalds its memory, then filidhs are its unshakable will.

The filidh is a variant wizard. Unless otherwise noted, a filidh advances in the same manner as a wizard (same Hit Die, base attack bonus, saving throw bonuses, skill points, and so on). When a character elects to take a level of wizard or filidh, he may not later take levels in the other class. This prevents the character from gaining the benefits of a 1st-level wizard twice.

Filidhs seek to preserve the beliefs of their tribe. As enforcers of ancestral traditions, they seek out magical power to increase their knowledge and strengthen their position within the tribe. These barbaric lore keepers tend toward neutral alignments, although both lawful and chaotic societies have traditions filidhs might seek to uphold. To aid them, most filidhs typically devote a significant number of spells to divination, balancing them with other offensive or supporting spells. These tribal wizards equate knowledge with power and carefully dispense their learning to a select few. They tend to play subtle but domineering roles in any group, even if they do not obviously lead it. Many filidhs associate with religious orders or druids as they often hold similar perspectives and goals.

Devout and spiritual beyond most traditional wizards, filidhs usually worship gods of knowledge, magic, poetry, or travel. They also highly respect and might worship creator gods, as they are usually credited with teaching laws to the first mortals. Other filidhs worship nature gods and explore the secrets of both the natural and the unseen world.

CLASS SKILLS

The filidh's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Survival (Wis).

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the filidh.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Filidhs are proficient with the club, dagger, quarterstaff, and shortbow but not with any type of armor or shield. Armor of any type interferes with a filidh's movements, which can cause her spells with somatic components to fail.

Filidh Knowledge: This ability functions as the bardic knowledge ability. A filidh with levels in another class that grants bardic knowledge stacks those levels with her filidh levels when determining her total bonus to bardic knowledge checks.

Greater Divining: A filidh is able to cast divination spells as if her caster level was +1 level higher at 5th level. This ability increases to +2 levels higher at 10th level, +3 levels higher at 15th level, and +4 levels higher at 20th level.

No Familiar: A filidh cannot summon a familiar.

FILIDH ADVANCEMENT

Level	Special
1st	Filidh knowledge
2nd	—
3rd	—
4th	—
5th	Greater divining +1
6th	—
7th	—
8th	—
9th	—
10th	Greater divining +2
11th	—
12th	—
13th	—
14th	—
15th	Greater divining +3
16th	—
17th	—
18th	—
19th	—
20th	Greater divining +4

by Mike McArtor

A Rogue of a Different Color

ROGUE

The undisputed master of skill points, a rogue can serve many different roles in a party depending on what skills she chooses to perfect. The theme and emphasis of a campaign might also significantly affect where the rogue puts her ranks. The following rogue archetypes give examples of different roles a rogue might play in the party, and each one offers advice for skill and feat selections. As a general rule, all rogues should put at least a few ranks in Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, and Spot, as these skills often prove the difference between life and death, even for a specialized rogue.

Backroom Rogue: Some rogues prefer the relatively safe life of operating holed up in a hidden location, putting their trained eye and steady hands to work. These rogues often operate a mostly legitimate business as a front for their more illicit activities, and many become wealthy just from the income of their honest proprietorship. Backroom rogues find the following skills most useful when maintained with the maximum ranks possible: Appraise, Decipher Script, Disguise, Forgery, Knowledge (local), Profession (merchant), and Use Magic Device. Depending on the nature of their business, they might wish to invest in other skills as well. These rogues prefer the feats Deceitful, Diligent, and Skill Focus.

Scheming Rogue: Focusing on the cerebral aspects of thievery and roguish behavior, scheming rogues often work as advisors to a succession of thieves' guild leaders. Their keen intellects make them valuable assets, while their analytical natures acknowledge the relative safety of staying out of the limelight. Scheming rogues make excellent masterminds, plotting and concocting elaborate heists or deadly games of political intrigue. In an adventuring party, the scheming rogue watches and listens, learning all he can about a situation or dilemma before making his move or offering his advice. Scheming rogues usually max out their ranks in Listen, Search, and Spot, as well as gaining in Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (local), and Sense Motive. His feats should focus on those that grant bonuses to his skills, such as Investigator, Negotiator, and Skill Focus.

Charming Rogue: This archetype focuses on Charisma-based interpersonal skills and fills many of the same roles as bards. However, thanks to her sneak attack ability, a charismatic rogue excels at winning over a victim then murdering him when he least expects an attack. Such rogues make excellent diplomats, merchants, and spies. The charming rogue focuses on Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate, Sense Motive, and Sleight of Hand. Her feat selections should focus on those that grant bonuses to her skills, especially Negotiator, Persuasive, and Skill Focus.

Trapspringer: Dwarves and gnomes often favor this type of rogue, as it focuses on skills they already appreciate and excel at. A trapspringer cares little about stealth and less about negotiation, and instead keeps Climb, Disable Device, Open Lock, Search, Sleight of Hand, Spot, Use Magic Device, and Use Rope at the highest rank possible. Craft (trapmaking), Decipher Script, and Jump can also be useful. Trapspringers often select Nimble Fingers at 1st level, but Lightning Reflexes and Toughness also make excellent choices.

Warrior Rogue: Often multiclassing as fighters or rangers, these battlers might take on any role from thug to swashbuckler. Most use their abilities to set up foes as targets for their sneak attacks. The skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, and Tumble often prove useful for a warrior rogue. When multiclassing, he should keep as many of his skills at the maximum rank possible, which means that such a character probably becomes quite good at climbing and jumping. For feats, a warrior rogue can't go wrong with Athletic, Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, or Weapon Finesse.

by Paul Leach

BARBARIAN CULTURE

BARBARIAN

Integral extensions of barbarian families, clans and tribes represent the most important structures of many uncivilized cultures. Kinfolk protect and censure other family members and, in return, expect members to avenge and repay any injustice committed against their relatives. In the absence of anything like law enforcement, family protection and vengeance provides tribal societies with a measure of internal peace.

TRIBES

Families make up the basic social units of tribal cultures. Most often, several families that share a common ancestor form an extended group or clan. Tribes consist of groups of clans. A horde or kingdom might form through the allegiance or subjugation of several tribes to one powerful tribe, but these political units vary in stability.

Tribal chieftains occupy the highest rank in savage society, followed by clan patriarchs and matriarchs. Other prominent tribe members might include craftsmen, entertainers, healers, priests, professional warriors, and similar skilled tribesmen. Free members of the tribe form the largest class. These commoners might or might not own land, but they do owe allegiance to a chieftain. The definition of "free" varies widely, but they typically have more rights than outright slaves or those otherwise bound to service. Slaves don't often constitute a large segment of a barbarian population, but exceptions exist.

BARBARIAN SOCIETIES

Few barbarian societies are the same, even if most of them share common values and social structure. Climate and terrain significantly influence savage societies, just as they do civilized ones. Their choices of shelter, food, and standard of living influence how they choose to adapt to their natural environment. The following examples detail the most common types of barbarian societies.

Nomadic: Nomadic savages often live on open plains and steppes that allow them to maintain their large herds of cattle, horses, sheep, and other herd animals. They move from region to region with the changing seasons and the needs of their animals. Since nomads do not rely on harvests, they readily move with their animals, often living in wagons, tents, or other easily portable shelters, although they might maintain solid buildings and forts as winter quarters. Nomadic cultures tend to produce excellent horsemen, a frequently drawn-upon boon as they often travel great distances to trade or raid.

Settled: Agriculture forms the basis of these savages' food supply, although they also hunt wild game. Settled savages often attain a relatively high standard of living if they dwell in lands with good soil and enough open space to support crops and grazing animals. A surplus food supply allows specialists such as warriors, priests, and craftsmen to devote their efforts to professional pursuits instead of feeding the tribe.

Wilderness: Environments such as dense forests or rugged mountains tend to restrict the agricultural development of tribal societies residing in such terrain. Hunting serves as the primary source of food since a lack of land limits a tribe's ability to grow crops or raise livestock. The savages who live in these rugged terrains often lead seminomadic lives, migrating to previously abandoned settlements after they've used up nearby meadows. Primitive even by barbarian standards, many wilderness-dwelling tribes must trade or barter for goods and supplies they cannot produce themselves.

SAVAGE WARFARE

A preoccupation with battle is the most notorious attribute of many savages. For many tribes, war serves as a reflection of the honor, courage, and ability of those who would wage it. Elite warriors of the tribe view combat as a sport and a necessary way to prove themselves. Feuds and minor raids serve to test them, and death is glorious if faced bravely.

Many savages, even those with good alignments, raid the homes of their enemies. While evil savages commit questionable acts or outright atrocities, even good savages might see nothing wrong with collecting the spoils or tribute from a defeated enemy. Between these extremes, neutral savages might adhere to social customs or laws and take advantage of any opportunity, regardless of moral compunction.

by Richard Pocklington

FLAWS FOR DRUIDS

DRUID

Whether your druid has a bestial taste for the flesh of his foes, is terrified by the idea of being surrounded by solid dungeon walls, or prefers to cavort about free of the encumbrances of civilization, playing a druid provides all sorts of good opportunities to act a little wild. Here is a selection of flaws like those presented in *Unearthed Arcana* that can help define your druid's particular beliefs . . . although they might make your party members wish they'd never agreed to enter the woods.

Flaws penalize a character in a specific way. Most of these flaws have obvious roleplaying consequences, but they also have game mechanics penalties. The concept of flaws first appeared in *Unearthed Arcana*, but you don't need that book to use the flaws presented here. A character may only take up to two flaws, and they must be selected at 1st level. For each flaw you take, your character may select an additional feat. Thus, a 1st level human character with two flaws may take four feats.

Although designed specifically with druids in mind, other characters may select from these flaws if they meet the appropriate prerequisites.

BESTIAL INSTINCT

You prefer to meet your foes so close that you can smell their blood.

Effect: You suffer a –2 penalty to hit while using anything other than unarmed strikes or natural weapons.

CITY SLICKER

Although interested in the natural world, you suffer from a lack of experience in the wilds.

Prerequisite: Survival as a class skill.

Effect: You suffer a –4 penalty on all Handle Animal, Knowledge (nature), and Survival checks.

CLAUSTROPHOBIA

You are uncomfortable in enclosed spaces.

Effect: You become shaken while in any space where you are within 10 feet of a wall or other solid surface on 2 or more sides, or if the ceiling is less than 10 feet above your head. (Such as while walking down a 20-foot-wide corridor or while you are in any room with a 10-foot-high ceiling.) Spells and effects that remove fear do not remove this condition.

COLD-BLOODED

You were raised in the arctic and cannot tolerate heat.

Effect: You automatically fail all Fortitude saves made to overcome the effects of high temperatures. Fire-based effects deal an additional 2 points of fire damage to you.

FORLORN OF MEN

You are uncomfortable in the presence of humanoids.

Effect: You become shaken if there is more than one humanoid within 30 feet of you, including members of your adventuring party or other friends. Spells and effects that remove fear do not remove this condition.

HOT-BLOODED

You were raised in the desert and cannot tolerate cold.

Effect: You automatically fail all Fortitude saves made to overcome the effects of low temperatures. Cold-based effects deal an additional 2 points of cold damage to you.

LOVE OF NATURE

You do not wish harm upon any natural creature.

Effect: You must succeed at a DC 12 Will save before you can attack any creature with the animal, plant, or vermin type, or you lose your action. Note that animals, plants, and vermin may attack you without penalty.

METAL INTOLERANCE

You are allergic to metals.

Effect: You suffer an additional point of damage when struck by metal weapons. The natural attacks of inevitables, iron golems, and other creatures composed of metal also deal this additional damage.

NO TIME FOR BOOK LEARNING

You put no faith in the written word.

Effect: You are illiterate. You can never learn to read any language, and you suffer a –2 penalty on all Knowledge checks except Knowledge (nature).

by Joshua Cole

PICKING FEATS AND PRESTIGE CLASSES

SORCERER

Sorcerers don't pore over musty old tomes. Artists rather than craftsmen, they hone their natural abilities to a razor edge. When a sorcerer sets out to learn something, it isn't magic. Perhaps that's why sorcerers don't acquire metamagic feats or qualify for prestige classes as easily as wizards—and why, when they do, they benefit all the more.

METAMAGIC FEATS

Although sorcerers don't automatically gain the wizard's wide selection of metamagic feats, they have even more reason to select them.

Empower Spell and Maximize Spell make a sorcerer's arsenal considerably more deadly, as they make a single damaging spell useful over a range of levels. An empowered *lightning bolt* is a perfectly valid 5th-level attack spell, freeing its sorcerous caster to choose something besides a direct-damage spell for his 5th-level spells known list.

For the same reason, Heighten Spell makes a good choice for a sorcerer. Sorcerers gain so many spell slots that applying this feat to their spells is more useful to them than to a wizard. By increasing save DCs, Heighten Spell improves even spells that don't have numeric components to benefit from being empowered or maximized (like *charm monster* or *trap the soul*).

Sorcerers also greatly benefit from Energy Substitution (presented in *Complete Arcane*). The ability to chose what kind of energy damage a spell deals makes the sorcerer's already flexible magical arsenal all the more versatile. Many favor acid damage, since few creatures have a resistance to it and it stops most regeneration.

Sorcerers should avoid combining metamagic feats with spells that already have a casting time of a full-round action or more. The resulting metamagic spell keeps the caster occupied for 2 vital rounds, as spells enhanced with metamagic feats take longer to cast.

PRESTIGE CLASSES

Many prestige classes augment spontaneous casting or offer unique benefits to sorcerers. Of them, several from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* prove particularly useful to sorcerers.

Arcane Trickster: Debate rages as to whether sorcerers or wizards make better arcane tricksters. Sorcerer arcane tricksters focus on magic and sneak attacks rather than skills, due to their commonly lower Intelligence. A sorcerer arcane trickster is a formidable combatant when combining sneak attacks and ranged touch spells.

Archmage: A sorcerous archmage loses little and gains much. All of the archmage's powerful high arcana abilities require the sacrifice of spell slots, of which a sorcerer has plenty. Sorcerous archmages benefit most from high arcana like master of elements and master of shaping.

Eldritch Knight: Sorcerers often excel as eldritch knights. With more spells relative to their level and as warrior spellcasters, they need fewer attack spells, allowing them to focus on spells that boost their combat abilities.

Loremaster: Sorcerers interested in further customizing their abilities and spell selection should consider this prestige class. Along with the varied abilities and bonuses a loremaster's secrets add, bonus 1st-level, 2nd-level, and divining spells expand a sorcerer's repertoire.

Mystic Theurge: Although this class might appeal to any spellcaster, sorcerers don't fare as well as other classes might as mystic theurges. Since sorcerers usually receive enough spells to cast each day already, the extra level required for a sorcerer to qualify for this class is probably not worth the sacrifice. However, other Charisma-based divine classes, such as the shugenja from *Oriental Adventures* or the favored soul from *Complete Divine*, provide useful options to a sorcerous character who also wants access to divine spells.

by Paul Leach

Optional Class: Wild Defender

RANGER

The wild defender is a holy warrior attuned to the sacred divinity of nature. Druids usually welcome them, but most wild defenders work in solitude. The wild defender guards the land and those who use it respectfully. Those who violate the wilderness consider wild defenders a manifestation of nature's wrath.

The wild defender is a variant ranger. Unless otherwise noted, a wild defender advances in the same manner as a ranger (same Hit Die, base attack bonus, saving throw bonuses, skill points, and so on). When a character elects to take a level of ranger or wild defender, he may not later take levels in the other class. This prevents the character from gaining the benefits of a 1st-level ranger twice.

Alignment: A wild defender must be neutral good, lawful neutral, neutral, or chaotic neutral.

Class Features

The wild defender loses the base ranger's favored enemy, bonus feats, combat style, camouflage, and hide in plain sight class features but gains several druid and paladin abilities and acquires some class features at different levels than a ranger.

Smite Evil (Su): Once per day, the wild defender may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma bonus (if any) to his attack roll and deals 1 extra point of damage per wild defender level. If the wild defender accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

At 5th level and every five levels thereafter, the wild defender may smite enemies one additional time per day, as indicated on the wild defender table. A character with levels in both wild defender and paladin adds his levels in both classes to determine how many times per day he may smite evil as well as the amount of extra damage he deals.

Natural Lore (Ex): The wild defender has a +2 bonus on Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks.

Trackless Step (Ex): At 3rd level, the wild defender leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. He may choose to leave a trail if so desired.

Resist Nature's Lure (Ex): At 4th level, the wild defender gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against the spell-like abilities of fey.

Rebuke Nature (Su): When the wild defender reaches 6th level, he gains the ability to rebuke (but not command) creatures of nature, just as an evil cleric can rebuke undead. He may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier. He rebukes nature as a cleric of three levels lower would turn undead. At 6th level, this ability only works on animals, but the wild defender gains control over a wider range of natural creatures as he gains levels.

The Wild Defender

		—Spells per Day—			
Level	Special	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	Natural lore, smite evil 1/day, wild empathy	0	—	—	—
2nd	Woodland stride	0	—	—	—
3rd	Trackless step	1	—	—	—
4th	Resist nature's lure	1	0	—	—
5th	Animal companion, smite evil 2/day	1	0	—	—
6th	Rebuke nature (animals)	1	1	—	—
7th		2	1	0	—
8th	Rebuke nature (vermin)	2	1	0	—
9th		2	1	1	—
10th	Smite evil 3/day	2	2	1	0
11th	Evasion	3	2	1	0
12th	Rebuke nature (plants)	3	2	1	1
13th		3	2	2	1
14th	Rebuke nature (fey)	3	3	2	1
15th	Smite evil 4/day	4	3	2	1
16th		4	3	2	2
17th		4	3	3	2
18th	Rebuke nature (oozes)	4	4	3	2
19th		5	4	3	3
20th	Rebuke nature (elementals), smite evil 5/day	5	4	4	4

by Richard Pocklington

FLAWS FOR PALADINS

PALADIN

A paladin faces the most blatantly obvious limitations of any class. High moral standards bind them and place many restrictions on their behavior. This sometimes makes roleplaying a paladin a rather straightforward affair, and as such, paladins are often a good choice for a beginning player who doesn't mind playing a cliché. While some of the paladin's moral limitations affect them in roleplaying situations, many more affect the paladin's battlefield tactics.

Flaws penalize a character in a specific way. Most of these flaws have obvious roleplaying consequences, but they also have game mechanics penalties. The concept of flaws first appeared in *Unearthed Arcana*, but you don't need that book to use the flaws presented here. A character may only take up to two flaws, and they must be selected at 1st level. For each flaw you take, your character may select an additional feat. Thus, a 1st level human character with two flaws may take four feats.

Although designed specifically with paladins in mind, other characters may select from these flaws if they meet the appropriate prerequisites.

CHIVALROUS COURTESY

You despise raising your hand against creatures of the opposite gender.

Prerequisite: Good or lawful alignment.

Effect: You suffer a –4 penalty on attack rolls to hit a creature you can tell is of the opposite gender.

CODE OF ARMS

Trained to only kill other armed warriors, you hesitate when attacking unarmed opponents.

Prerequisite: Good or lawful alignment.

Effect: You suffer a –4 penalty on attack rolls made against an enemy not armed with a melee weapon. If the enemy uses a natural attack against you, you may then attack it without penalty.

HONORABLE CHALLENGE

You only cross arms with foes who willingly engage you.

Prerequisite: Lawful alignment.

Effect: You suffer a –4 penalty on attack rolls against creatures that have not explicitly challenged you or made an attack against you. For the purposes of this feat, an attack against you includes any action that would end an *invisibility* spell (see page 245 of the *Player's Handbook*).

HONOR OF THE DUEL

You strongly believe in one-on-one combat to decide a fight.

Prerequisite: Good or lawful alignment.

Effect: You must make a Will save (DC 10 + your level) to attack a creature in a square threatened by one of its other foes. A successful save allows you to attack such a creature, albeit with a –2 penalty on your attack rolls. A failed save prohibits you from attacking that creature.

MOUNTED WARRIOR

You only feel comfortable fighting from the saddle.

Prerequisite: Ride 1 rank.

Effect: You suffer a –2 penalty on attack rolls made while not riding a mount.

PRIDE OF ARMS

You take great pride in knowing how to use weapons specifically designed for war. You consider all other weapons beneath your station and have allowed your training in them to atrophy.

Prerequisite: Proficiency in all martial weapons.

Effect: You suffer a –4 penalty on all attack rolls made with exotic weapons, simple weapons, unarmed attacks, and touch attacks.

SOLITARY PARAGON

You prefer to fight alone.

Effect: You gain no benefit from flanking a foe and instead suffer a –4 penalty on attack rolls made against a foe you flank.

WARRIOR OF THE PHALANX

Trained to fight in a group, you have difficulties when fighting alone.

Effect: You suffer a –4 penalty on attack rolls you make when not adjacent to an ally.

by Paul Leach

Optional Class: Wild Monk

MONK

The wild monk attains perfection by embracing the natural order. She learns from the ebb and flow of the seasons and the living land. She imitates the ways of animals—how they move, how they fight, and how they find their places in the world. As the wild monk grows in power, she assumes a number of druidic abilities.

Wild monks do not congregate in monasteries as do normal monks. Instead, they gather in small communities, often in sacred or otherwise special natural locales. If they share territory with druids, wild monk communities usually stay on good terms with them. Like rangers, many wild monks serve with druids and aid them in defending nature. Although they often worship gods of nature or nature itself, some wild monks also revere tribal deities or the lawful deities of normal monks.

The wild monk is a variant monk. Unless otherwise noted, a wild monk advances in the same manner as a monk (same Hit Die, base attack bonus, saving throw bonuses, skill points, and so on). When a character elects to take a level of monk or wild monk, he may not later take levels in the other class. This prevents the character from gaining the benefits of a 1st-level monk twice.

Alignment: Wild monks must adhere to the discipline of the natural order. They may only be lawful neutral.

Class Skills

The wild monk's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), and Tumble (Dex).

Class Features

The wild monk trades several monk class features for druid abilities as noted on the level progression table. The wild monk may freely multiclass with the druid class. If the character chooses any other multiclass option, she may not gain any more wild monk levels.

Resist Nature's Lure (Ex): Starting at 3rd level, the wild monk gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against the spell-like abilities of fey.

Wild Shape (Su): At 6th level, the wild monk gains the ability to turn herself into any Small or Medium animal and back again once per day. This ability works exactly as the druid ability of the same name. The wild monk can use this ability more times per day at 8th, 10th, 14th, 18th, and 20th level, as noted on the wild monk advancement table. In addition, she gains the ability to take the shape of a Large animal at 12th level, a Tiny animal at 15th level, and a Huge animal at 16th level. At 19th level, the wild monk becomes able to use wild shape to change into a Small, Medium, or Large elemental once per day.

If a character has levels in both wild monk and druid, the wild shape abilities of each class act independently of the other. Thus, an 11th-level druid/9th-level wild monk could wild shape four times per day as a druid and take the form of any Tiny, Small, Medium, or Large animal, and she could wild shape twice per day as a wild monk and take the form of any Small or Medium animal.

The Wild Monk

Level	Special
1st	Flurry of blows, unarmed strike
2nd	Evasion
3rd	Resist nature's lure
4th	*Ki* strike (magic)
5th	Purity of body
6th	Wild shape (1/day)
7th	Wholeness of body
8th	Wild shape (2/day)
9th	Improved evasion
10th	*Ki* strike (lawful), wild shape (3/day)
11th	Diamond body, greater flurry
12th	Wild shape (Large)
13th	Diamond soul
14th	Wild shape (4/day)
15th	Wild shape (Tiny)
16th	*Ki* strike (adamanite), wild shape (Huge)
17th	Timeless body, tongue of sun and moon
18th	Wild shape (5/day)
19th	Wild shape (elemental 1/day)
20th	Perfect self, wild shape (6/day, elemental 2/day)

by Richard Pocklington

FLAWS FOR BARDS

Roleplaying the stereotypical lighthearted bard can be an enjoyable experience. Bards usually act as the group's spokesperson, the "face" of the party, as their high Charisma and generally upbeat natures allow them to charm even the tersest NPC. Bards have access to a wide variety of skills, combat abilities, and spellcasting abilities. Thus, they do a little bit of everything as they advance in levels. However, not every bard is a skilled performer, expert spellcaster, knowledgeable scholar, and passable warrior. Many bards allow their brash and outgoing personalities to get in the way of their abilities, making them flawed performers at best.

Flaws penalize a character in a specific way. Most of these flaws have obvious roleplaying consequences, but they also have game mechanics penalties. The concept of flaws first appeared in *Unearthed Arcana*, but you don't need that book to use the flaws presented here. A character may only take up to two flaws, and they must be selected at 1st level. For each flaw you take, your character may select an additional feat. Thus, a 1st-level human character with two flaws may take four feats.

Although designed specifically with bards in mind, other characters may select from these flaws if they meet the appropriate prerequisites.

ARCANE PERFORMER

You depend upon your performance ability to aid in the casting of spells.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast arcane spells without preparation, Perform 1 rank.

Effect: In order to cast any spell, you must succeed at a Perform check (DC 10 + spell level). If you fail, you lose the spell.

BRASH

You move about without careful consideration of foes.

Effect: You suffer a –6 penalty to your Armor Class against attacks of opportunity.

COWARD

In dangerous circumstances, you are likely to run away.

Effect: You automatically fail all saves against fear effects. An ability that makes you immune to fear (such as becoming a 3rd-level paladin) instead grants you a saving throw, but at a –4 penalty on the save.

FOOL

Your excessively lighthearted nature grates on your companions.

Prerequisite: Bardic music.

Effect: You lose the inspire courage, inspire competence, inspire greatness, and inspire heroics bardic music abilities.

FRIVOLOUS PERFORMER

Having focused your time on practicing and performing, you have gathered little useful information in your travels.

Prerequisite: Bardic knowledge.

Effect: You suffer a –10 penalty on all bardic knowledge checks. This penalty does not apply if the relevant knowledge involves the Perform skill in which you have the most ranks. For example, if you have the most ranks in Perform (wind instrument), you may use bardic knowledge without penalty to identify famous wind instruments, to remember facts about famous wind instrument players, or to identify places that make quality wind instruments.

LOUDMOUTH

You are a loud, obnoxious, boisterous, and compulsive talker.

Effect: You suffer a –4 penalty on all Diplomacy and Move Silently checks.

METICULOUS PERFORMER

You get lost in your performances.

Prerequisite: Bardic music.

Effect: Initiating or maintaining any bardic music ability is a full-round action.

TRIVIAL PERFORMER

Your performance is lighthearted and has limited effect on others.

Prerequisite: Bardic music.

Effect: The save DC against your fascinate, *suggestion*, and *mass suggestion* abilities is half normal (rounded down). If you use the inspire courage, inspire greatness, or inspire heroics bardic music abilities, their benefits end as soon as you stop performing (rather than lasting for an additional 5 rounds).

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by Tracy Taylor

TEAMWORK

Whether it's the player who brings a paladin into a chaotic neutral party, the wizard who spends each combat casting defensive spells only on himself, or the roleplayer who endangers the party and proclaims, "It's what my character would do," an unthinking player can ruin the fun for everyone. In the world of roleplaying games, you can do anything imaginable, and no decision is wrong. A player can play a well-read bard in one game and an illiterate raging barbarian in the next. However, just because some decisions are possible, it doesn't make them all good ideas. With freedom and choice come responsibility and the simple truth that some decisions are better than others.

Fortunately though, most players genuinely want to play as an integral and contributing member of the group, making selfish characters and players relatively rare. A roleplaying game pools everyone's unique talents, skills, and imagination to achieve a common goal. Victory in a roleplaying game requires that all the players band together to overcome the challenges the DM creates. The enjoyment of the entire group, including the DM, relies on every player remembering this and placing his or her personal aspirations second to doing what's best for the group. Fortunately, by remembering a few simple concepts when creating a character and playing the game, you can ensure that individuality does not eclipse teamwork.

Don't play the antiparty character. Take the time to find out what everyone else is playing and create a character that fits. If the party consists of neutral evil characters, rethink playing a paladin. While intraparty tension can make for interesting roleplaying opportunities, it is more likely to result in dissension and bad feelings. Many games crumble because of an antiparty character.

Choose the right class. Do you like being the center of attention, or do you prefer to avoid the spotlight and contribute by helping others? Technically, any player can play any class, but some players prefer one or two classes more than others. If you prefer playing the mighty warrior, killing each monster with a piercing battle cry, then reconsider making a cleric or arcane spellcaster. Remember, though, playing a barbarian in one game doesn't mean you can't play a bard or sorcerer in the next.

Know your character. It sounds basic, but this is one of most common mistakes. When it comes to your character, you have absolute control. You create him and make him as simple or as complex as you wish. Take the time to research his starting class. Figure out his strengths and weaknesses. Think of ways to use the former to help the party, while minimizing the latter. Does your character wear full plate, carry a shield, and have an Armor Class over 30? If so, he needs to provoke attacks of opportunity so the rogue can move in afterward and use her sneak attacks. Remember: If all the players play to the best of their characters' abilities, the group as a whole stands a much better chance of succeeding—and surviving.

Think tactically. Some players have a harder time with this than others. However, even the most tactically deficient player can overcome his handicap by asking two simple questions: "What is everyone else going to do?" and "How can I help?" If your barbarian goes first, you should probably have him wait for the wizard to cast *fireball* before rushing in. Likewise, your spellcaster probably shouldn't put herself between the raging barbarian and the bad guys. Bad tactics are the leading cause of character deaths.

Get off the bench, and get in the game. Don't forget, even after your favorite character has died a couple of times, that every round your character stays out of the combat, the rest of the party is shorthanded. Nothing, except maybe not paying attention, imperils a group more.

Ask yourself: "How is my decision going to affect everyone else?" If the decision will likely create bad feelings among the other players or isn't going to contribute to the current situation in a meaningful way, you should give it some more thought. Remember, a roleplaying game is all about working together as a team.

by Joshua Cole

MAGIC TRAPS

Overcome the pitfalls of dungeoneering with sorcery instead of skullduggery! Whether by intent or accident, a time comes in every adventuring band's career when all the rogues are out of commission and traps loom ahead; a time for new ideas, new methods, and more than a few saving throws. Fortunately, there's more than one way to skin a catoblepas—or to disarm a trap.

DIVINING DANGERS

Although rogues are the only class capable of finding and disarming magic traps without the use of magic, other classes can employ spells to search for and even disable all varieties of traps. Indeed, a timely *detect snares and pits* can actually put the odds in a ranger's favor. The cleric's *find traps* spell has limited uses, but for a party without a rogue, it is invaluable.

As the PCs reach higher levels and the traps become more magical, their options for discovering traps become more powerful. A few carefully worded *augury, commune,* or *divination* spells can provide clearer information, but their cost in spell slots make them most useful only when your party simply cannot survive another trap.

Higher-level spells, such as *legend lore,* can reveal whether a particular opponent is known for using certain types of magic. For example, if the lich you face makes a habit of casting electricity-based spells, then electricity-based traps likely fill his tower. This knowledge allows you to prepare accordingly. *Commune* or *contact other plane* could conceivably provide better information, although the risks and costs associated with such spells make them less desirable choices.

TAKING YOUR LICKS

Spells like *protection from elements* and *aid* can help the party's tougher characters endure the punishment inflicted by traps. *Mage armor, shield, stoneskin,* and similar protective measures are ideal for countering a wide range of traps.

Magic items can also help absorb trap damage. Any item that reduces or eliminates damage from fire works just as well against a fire-based trap as it does against a red dragon's breath. In more general terms, a *cloak of resistance* can potentially reduce a lot of trap damage. A character with a +3 or +4 *cloak of resistance* has far less to fear from any magic trap that grants a saving throw (as most do).

Alternatively, you can avoid trap damage entirely using spells like *dimension door, passwall, teleport,* and even relatively simple spells like *levitate* and *spider climb.* Pressure plates on the floor are unlikely to harm a party that never touches the ground, and swinging blades and dart traps set low in the dungeon won't prove dangerous either.

DETECTING MAGIC TRAPS

At first glance, rogues seem essential to finding magic traps. They're not.

In fact, most parties that have a rogue shouldn't waste time dealing with Search checks in each room.

Why not?

Detect magic should locate every magic trap in a room or corridor. Every spellcaster with cantrips and orisons has access to it. Most spellcasters should use the majority of their available 0-level spells on *detect magic.*

Granted, the caster might not know the exact nature of the aura his *detect magic* reveals, but with a little common sense, the player can usually guess if it's a trap or not. The glowering eye in the statue of Gruumsh that stands over the orcs' treasure and has a magic aura should draw more attention to itself than the orc warchief's magic sword, as the eye is liable to fire off a ray or two at the unwary.

Once your party's spellcasters have discovered a magic trap, getting rid of it shouldn't be exceptionally difficult. In many cases, *dispel magic* can eliminate a magic trap faster, easier, and safer than a rogue could by himself. A party without a rogue should invest in several *wands of dispel magic* to avoid using up the party's stores of valuable 3rd-level spells. In fact, even a party with a rogue—preferably with a high Use Magic Device bonus—should carry at least one such wand to save the rogue from the dangers of rolling poorly when disabling a trap.

Finally, higher-level spells, like *Mordenkainen's disjunction* and *antimagic field,* eliminate any magic trap of less than artifact level. Of course, if your party infiltrates a dungeon with traps made from artifacts, you might want to rethink going in without a rogue . . . or at all!

by Andy Collins

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

This month, the sage delves into questions regarding divine spells and the characters who cast them. Send your questions to **sageadvice@paizo.com**.

If a cleric's turning check results in 0 being the Hit Dice of the most powerful undead affected, does that mean the cleric's turn attempt failed, or is 1 HD always the minimum?

There is no minimum HD result for a turning check. If a 1st-level cleric rolls a total turning check of 9 or less, he can't turn any undead (since the most powerful undead affected would be 0 HD). In general, unless the rules specifically state that a minimum value exists, it doesn't.

How do I know when my cleric can prepare spells? Does he need to rest first?

Divine spellcasters who prepare spells (such as clerics and druids) choose and prepare their spells at a particular time of day. Unless the character's deity or faith specifies a particular time, the character chooses his spell preparation time when he first gains the ability to cast divine spells. Dawn, dusk, noon, and midnight are common choices. If some event prevents the character from praying for his spells at the proper time, he must do so as soon as possible or else wait until the next day to prepare his spells. Unlike wizards, divine spellcasters need not rest before preparing spells.

How does a favored soul or other spontaneous divine spellcaster ready his spells for the day?

Favored souls, shugenjas, spirit shamans, and other purely spontaneous divine spellcasters ready spells each day just as sorcerers do. They require 8 hours of rest beforehand and 15 minutes of concentration.

My DM says that my cleric has to drop his morningstar to cast spells. Is he right?

Yes and no. To cast a spell with a somatic (S) component, you must gesture freely with at least one hand (see the Player's Handbook, *page 140). A cleric (or any caster, for that matter) who holds a weapon in one hand and wears a heavy shield on the other arm doesn't have a hand free to cast a spell with a somatic component (which includes most spells in the game). To cast such a spell, a character with a heavy shield and weapon must either drop or sheathe his weapon.*

Another simple option is for the cleric to carry a buckler or light shield instead of a heavy shield. The buckler leaves one hand free for spellcasting, and you don't even lose the buckler's shield bonus to AC when casting with that hand. The light shield doesn't give you a free hand for spellcasting, but since you can hold an item in the same hand that holds the light shield, you could switch your weapon to that hand to free up a hand for spellcasting. (You can't use the weapon while it's held in the same hand as your shield, of course.) The rules don't state what type of action is required to switch hands on a weapon, but it seems reasonable to assume that it's the equivalent of drawing a weapon (a move action that doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity).

Can my cleric of Pelor activate a *wand of holy smite* if he doesn't have the Good

domain? After all, it's on his deity's list of domain spells, so that's the same as being on my character's spell list, right?

Your character's domain spells are treated as being on your class spell list for the purpose of using wands, scrolls, and similar items, but that only applies to spells in domains that your character has actually chosen. If you haven't selected the domain as one of your two domains, the spells of that domain aren't considered on your spell list (unless they're already on your spell list from your class, such as aid, *which is on all clerics' spell lists and not just the spell lists of clerics with the Good or Luck domain).*

Is the sacred fist (a prestige class found in *Complete Divine*) supposed to wear armor? None of the class abilities are inhibited by wearing light armor, and as long as he's wearing armor, he might as well carry a shield, too, since he'd only be losing the class's AC bonus.

The sacred fist can wear light armor. Whether or not a specific sacred fist wears light armor depends on what class features he might have from other classes. For instance, a sacred fist with monk levels (a strong likelihood) gives up his AC bonuses (including his Wisdom bonus to AC), his flurry of blows, and his fast movement when wearing light armor. Still, for a sacred fist with only one or two monk levels, that might be worthwhile—his light armor's AC bonus might make up for the lost AC bonuses from the monk class, and he hasn't yet gained a speed bonus.

Whether the sacred fist benefits from carrying a shield depends on the character. Some sacred fists might prefer having their off hand free (such as for climbing). Also, a sacred fist's AC bonus applies even against touch attacks, while a shield's bonus to AC does not.

The description of the Divine Metamagic feat (from *Complete Divine*) says the feat applies to divine spells, without explicitly excluding arcane spells. Does it work with divine spells only, or with both divine and arcane spells? For example, can a wizard that also has cleric levels use Divine Metamagic to enhance his arcane spells?

The feat only works on divine spells. The flavor text suggests this and the benefit should state this clearly.

Can a cleric with the Divine Metamagic feat apply a metamagic effect to a spell whose level would ordinarily be too high to gain the metamagic effect from his metamagic feat?

Yes. Applying a metamagic effect in this manner has no effect on the spell's level. For example, a 9th-level cleric with Divine Metamagic (Empower Spell) could spend four turn/rebuke undead attempts to empower a flame strike *spell, even though empowered* flame strike *would normally require an 8th-level spell slot to cast.*

Some of the spells in *Complete Divine* refer to the Ocean domain, but that domain doesn't appear in the book. How can my character use these spells?

Both maelstrom *and* waterspout *originally appeared in the* Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting, *which included the Ocean domain for several deities of that setting. In another D&D game, you can either ignore these spells or add them as druid spells of the same level (8th and 7th, respectively). For* tidal surge, *simply ignore the Ocean domain listing (it was added inadvertently) and use only the "Druid 6" listing.*

The *unyielding roots* spell (from *Complete Divine*) anchors the recipient, making it impossible for him to move from his space. The flanking rules are based on the lack of facing in the game, but they presume that a creature is always turning to deal with adjacent attackers. Should the immobility imbued by this spell also make it easier for a creature to flank the recipient, as the recipient cannot move to face the attacker?

A creature under the effect of unyielding roots *is just as vulnerable to flanking as any other creature, but no more so. There are a whole category of immobilizing spells and effects, such as* hold person, *that would appear to create similar situations, but these effects don't alter the fundamentally abstract nature of D&D combat.*

On the other hand, if you're using the Combat Facing variant found in Unearthed Arcana, *the* unyielding roots *spell could create some interesting tactical limitations for the recipient.*

The *vigor* series of spells (found in *Complete Divine*) raise an interesting question. Does the built-in maximum duration of each spell limitation override the effect of the Extend Spell feat?

Yes. Extend Spell still increases the spell's duration, but only up to a maximum of the spell's listed maximum duration. Use either the normal maximum duration or the doubled duration, whichever is less. If a 7th-level druid used Extend Spell on her vigor *spell, the duration could not increase beyond 25 rounds.*

The *mass lesser vigor* spell has a fixed range of 20 ft., which makes it eligible for the revised Persistent Spell feat in *Players Guide to Faerûn*. Does that mean a 17th-level druid could use a 9th-level spell slot to give nine creatures fast healing 1 for 24 hours, or does the built-in limit of 25 rounds make that pointless?

Unlike Extend Spell, Persistent Spell replaces a spell's normal duration with a new duration of 24 hours. In this case, the effect overrides the normal maximum duration of the spell, so it would indeed grant nine creatures fast healing 1 for 24 hours (a pretty reasonable effect for a 9th-level spell).

What is Tharizdun's favored weapon? *Complete Divine* says it's "check toee," but I don't know what that is.

That's a developer's note to "check [Tharizdun's entry in Return to the] Temple of Elemental Evil*" for the proper weapon. As the adventure tells us, the favored weapon of Tharizdun's priesthood is the (curved) dagger.*

I have a monk with the Vow of Poverty feat from *Book of Exalted Deeds*. Does the Exalted Strike bonus apply to grapple, sunder, disarm, and trip attempts?

The exalted strike bonus gained by a character who has taken Vow of Poverty applies only on attack and damage rolls. Unless something is described as an attack roll or a damage roll, the bonus doesn't apply.

The touch attack made to start a grapple is an attack roll (so the bonus would apply to this roll), but a grapple check is not an attack roll, and thus the bonus wouldn't apply on the grapple check. Likewise, the touch attack made to start a trip attack would gain the bonus, but the Strength check you make to trip the defender is not an attack roll and wouldn't gain the bonus.

To attempt a disarm attack or a sunder attack, you make an attack roll opposed by the defender's attack roll, so the exalted strike bonus would apply.

How do the equipment restrictions put on a character by the Vow of Poverty feat affect class-defining items (in other words, a cleric's holy symbol, wizard's familiar, samurai's daisho, paladin's mount, and so on)?

The Vow of Poverty feat is very specific about the items that a character can own while gaining the benefits of the feat (see page 48 in Book of Exalted Deeds *for details). It specifically disallows ownership of masterwork or magic weapons, and thus a samurai who chooses this feat must give up his daisho (his pair of masterwork weapons). A holy symbol does not appear on the list of eligible items, and thus a strict reading of the feat would disallow the item. A familiar, special mount, or animal companion isn't a material possession, and thus a character with Vow of Poverty isn't restricted from gaining the benefits of such creatures.*

Remember that the Vow of Poverty feat, like most of the material found in Book of Exalted Deeds, *is intended for mature campaigns that are capable of handling difficult roleplaying issues. A cleric who must give up his holy symbol (effectively preventing him from turning undead or casting any spell that requires a divine focus) could be a very interesting challenge for a player who wants to try something unusual.*

Can the holy touch power of the saint template from *Book of Exalted Deeds* deal nonlethal damage? If not, can my saint choose not to deal holy damage, in instances where he would rather subdue a foe than kill it?

The saint can't choose for his holy touch damage to deal nonlethal damage, just like a fighter wielding a +1 flaming longsword *can't choose for the fire damage to be nonlethal (even if the base weapon damage is nonlethal). The saint can't turn off this power (in general, special abilities that don't involve activation can't be turned off).*

Dragon

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by Andy Collins,
Developer for Roleplaying R&D at
Wizards of the Coast

DEVELOPMENT: MAKING D&D WORK

Everybody understands what designers and editors do for a D&D product, but the concept of dedicated developers is less common in the RPG industry than in the computer game or trading card game (TCG) industries. For Wizards of the Coast, the RPG development team represents a new (and still evolving) segment of the process of bringing an RPG product from concept to shelf.

The RPG development team first appeared in a form resembling its current incarnation in the spring of 2003. Led by Andrew Finch (a veteran of Wizards of the Coast R&D), the team melded the RPG design experience of Richard Baker (who's worked on just about every TSR and Wizards of the Coast RPG line over the last 10 years) with the game development expertise of Michael Donais (previously a TCG developer with Wizards of the Coast).

Together, these three took on the responsibility of evaluating D&D manuscripts as they came out of design, focusing most closely on the game mechanics in each product. The goal: to approach the RPG creation process with some of the rigorous attention to mechanical details common to TCG creation. Ideally, this would allow designers to approach each new project with unfettered creativity without bogging down in details of execution. In turn, the editors could focus on issues of style, presentation, clarity of language, and so on, without simultaneously having to worry about evaluating every game mechanic for its impact on the game. As an added benefit, this central workshop for D&D development would help prevent unnecessary parallel design, ensuring that each book had the right mix of the game system's mechanics. As the library of D&D products continued to grow, the importance of that role became increasingly clear.

Today, Jesse Decker, who brings experience both as a game designer and as the former editor-in-chief of DRAGON, leads the RPG development team that includes Michael Donais, Rob Watkins, and myself.

WHAT IS RPG DEVELOPMENT?

The process of developing an RPG owes a lot to what Wizards of the Coast's R&D learned about designing and developing trading card games over the last 10 years. The developers evaluate each new mechanical concept presented by the designers—such as a prestige class, magic item, monster, or new game rule—and adjust the execution of that concept (the way it works in the game) until it meets the desired criteria. For a new spell, this includes (among other things) ensuring it's available to the right class, its effects are in line with other spells of the same level, and that it works appropriately within the rules of the game.

When examining new options for existing in-game systems (such as spells or prestige classes), the development process focuses on comparing new mechanics to existing ones. This ensures that new mechanics are balanced with those that already exist, and it prevents overlap with materials already in the game.

For entirely new rules, the development team has a bigger chore: evaluating their impact on the game. The revised psionics rules in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and the substitution-level mechanic introduced in the *Planar Handbook* benefited from this type of development. In such cases, the developers aim to take strong mechanical concepts from the designers and fine-tune them to deliver a solid gaming experience.

The biggest challenge facing the members of the development team is prioritization. From day one, it became clear the team couldn't afford to give every RPG product a full-fledged development phase. Early on, the development team had to take an opportunistic approach, stealing a week here or a couple days there to work on the most crucial products between the designer's deadline and the start of the editor's work. Slowly but surely, as later schedules were built and the development team grew in size, it could evaluate more products, and it gained more time on each one. Today, the development team spends up to six weeks on each RPG product that it reviews. Although not every RPG product gets the same amount of attention, the majority of books that bear the D&D logo (and virtually 100% of the core D&D products) go through this process.

That's a brief look at the development process, but hopefully it gives you some insight into the ways Wizards of the Coast R&D continues to evolve to meet the challenges of creating the best RPG products and experiences possible.

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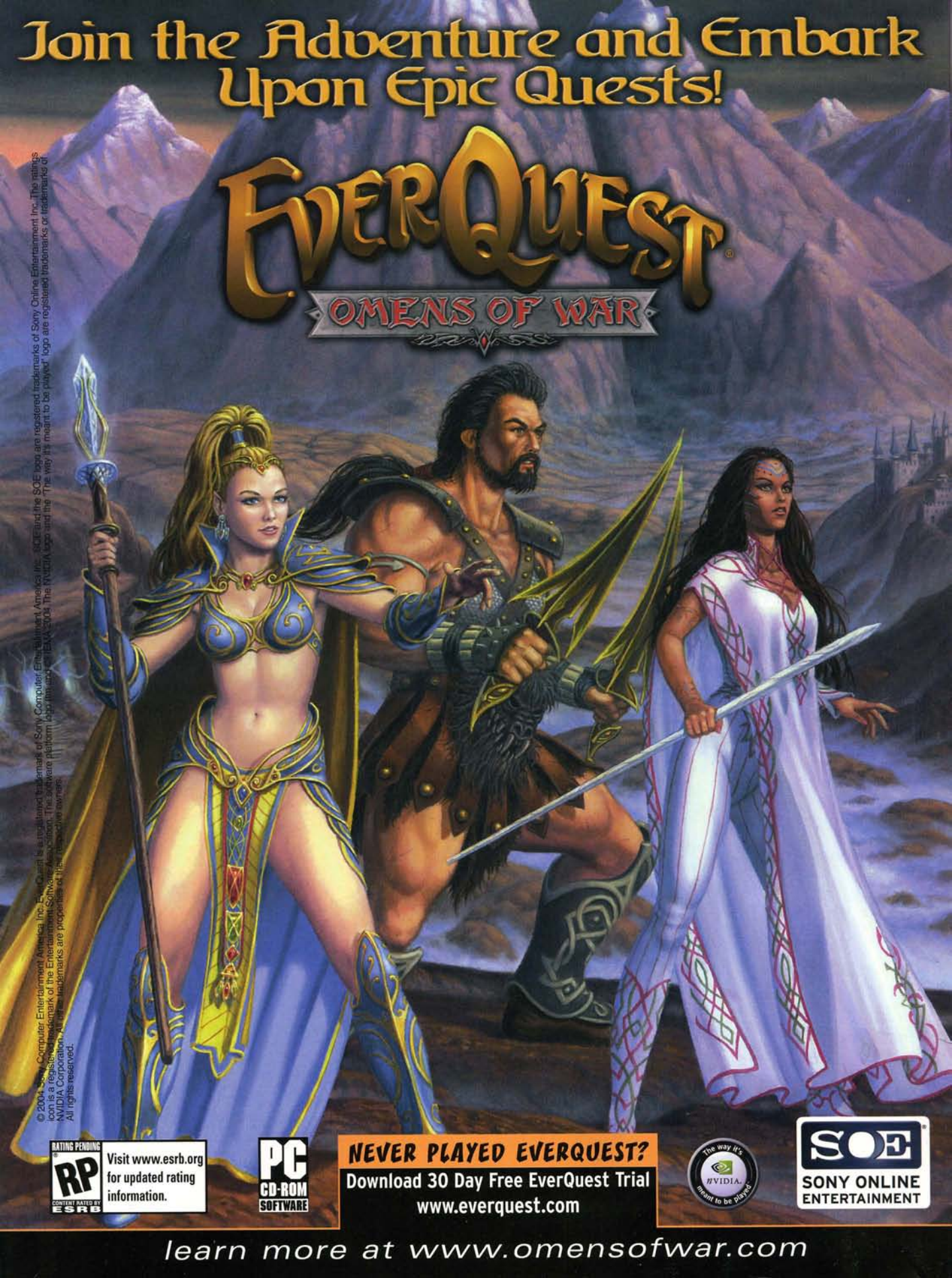
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